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The Impact of Service Learning on Perceptions of Self-Efficacy

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THE IMPACT OF SERVICE LEARNING ON PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-EFFICACY

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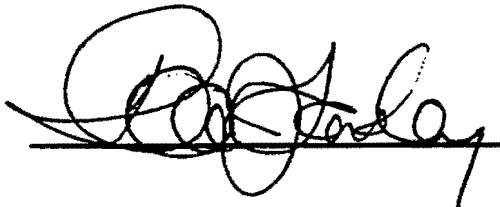

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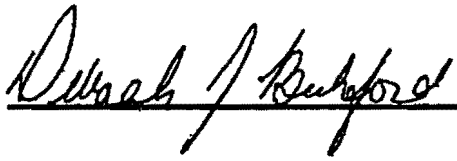

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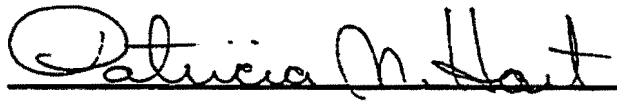

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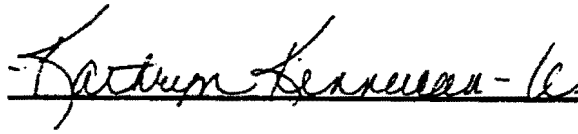

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THE IMPACT OF SERVICE LEARNING ON PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-EFFICACY

By

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Abstract:

In recent years, the role of higher education in promoting volunteerism and social responsibility through service learning has become an issue that may radically impact both faculty and student development programs on American college campuses. Despite the significant amount of data regarding the impact of student participation in service learning on students' attitudes toward volunteerism and social responsibility, there is still a tremendous gap in our understanding of how such participation impacts subsequent student perceptions of personal self-efficacy. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to further articulate and clarify the relationship between student involvement in service learning courses and student perceptions of self-efficacy and personal obligation with regard to community and public service.

What evolved in this study is a report of findings based on shared, inter-subjective interpretations of the data. Interview transcripts, field notes from participant observation, student journals, and documents collected in conjunction with the various service projects form the entire data base for the study. Borrowed from the Appalachian tradition, a quilting metaphor was used for data analysis, with loose blocks of colored paper representing the individual categories of data, and the variety of patterns in a quilt representing the constant comparison of those blocks of data. Themes were identified based on their contextual significance and relevance for understanding the context of service learning and how such activities might challenge students' understanding of self-efficacy in relation to community.

This study identified and interpreted three themes that may contribute to an understanding of this relationship between participation in service learning and enhanced perceptions of self-efficacy and empowerment in community. Analysis of the data yielded the following common themes: perception of benefit to communities through service learning, perception of identity clarification with community, and a connection between academic theory and experiential practice. Service learning's visionary paradigm of educators as both nurturing caregivers and disseminators of knowledge represents our concern for holistic perceptions of self-efficacy, or the understanding of the self as inter-related and connected to one's community, and having the power to make a difference in that community.

To my loving parents, Reba and Leonard McCurry, who have always been the true source of all my aspirations. Because of their undying faith in me, I could never abandon my dream to become a teacher.

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This study could not have been accomplished without the help of many others who also contributed in ways too varied to list. To the students involved in this study, I remain completely enamored of their willingness to share their time, as well as their thoughts and feelings with respect to their experiences in service learning. Throughout the process of developing this study, I have also been truly blessed with friends who listened to untold tirades of frustration and feelings of defeat along the way. For your uncompromising and unconditional support, I thank you, Judy Brown, Teri Geiger, T.J. Bennett, Deborah Test, Joanne Troha, and Renate Ulrich. Your kindness has meant so very much to me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

As service learning becomes an integral component of our academic programs in higher education, college students will be challenged to reevaluate their own lives with respect to their roles as socially responsible citizens living in community. In recent years, the role of higher education in promoting volunteerism and social responsibility has become an issue that may radically impact both faculty and student development programs on American college campuses (Kohn, 1999; Oliver, 1990). Despite the significant amount of data regarding the various factors that contribute to college students' beliefs regarding their sense of social responsibility toward their community, there is still a tremendous gap in our understanding of the influence of student participation in service learning activities, and how such participation impacts subsequent student perceptions of self-efficacy in community.

In the increasingly global community of the 21st century, it is necessary to explore pedagogical methods that promote the assimilation of globally relevant educational values, such as a better understanding of multicultural perspectives and appreciation of diversity in pluralistic societies (Daloz, Keen, & Keen, 1996). The vast swell of programs and research that currently scaffolds the service learning paradigm is representative of educational values embraced by many countries in the international

community (Tierney, 1993). Around the world, service learning is being promoted for a wide range of disciplines, including the sciences, humanities, law, business, and engineering (Kraft, 1996; Sampson, 1989). In the United States, service learning is being embraced as a tool to promote citizenship education in a democratic society (Boyer, 1983, 1987; Kozol, 1996). In universities around the world, service learning's visionary paradigm of educators as both nurturing caregivers and disseminators of knowledge represents our concern for holistic perceptions of self-efficacy, or the understanding of the self not only as inter-related and connected to one's community, but as also having the power to make a difference in that community (Freire, 1972; Radest, 1993).

Significance of the Problem

It seems that there may be a disconnect between two important educational goals and values that we hold for educators: first, we think of educators as those who can best impart information about the world in which we live; and second, we think of educational leaders as persons who should exhibit genuine care and concern for the holistic growth and well-being of others, both in children and adults. Yet these two values are seldom expressed as mutually inclusive ideals to be sought by educational leaders. Indeed, many have written extensively in promotion of schools as nurturing havens for students (particularly in K-12) to the near exclusion of concern for rigorous academic work (Delve, Mintz, & Stewart, 1990; Kozol, 1996; Wuthnow, 1991). Then there are others who have suggested that our schools should be strictly committed to the business of hard intellectual work, and leave the "nurturing" to the social workers (Hirsch, 1999; Jennings & Nathan, 1977).

Perhaps the easiest way to understand the reason for this disconnect is through the lens of educational leaders who ask themselves this question: Is the primary task of the teacher to teach, or to nurture? This question is both compelling and exasperating. It is also not new – Socrates argued that education is intended to help young people become both good and smart. The question was clearly compelling over 2,000 years ago. It is an equally compelling question for those who feel that an answer will be tantamount to an explanation of precisely what is right (or wrong) with the education profession today. However, it is an exasperating question for others who feel that the delineation of educational goals should not be reduced to an assessment of a preference for either excellence or equality in education (as this conundrum is often referred to in academic circles).

I count myself among these "others" and see the problem not so much in terms of prioritization, but rather as a reflection of competing (and often incongruent) values and beliefs about the nature of knowledge in general. Notice, for example, that the question itself tacitly assumes the necessity of an either-or response: is the primary task of the teacher to teach, or to nurture? Should we strive for excellence or equality? Posed in this manner, our question precludes the logical possibility of an alternative response, namely, one that would envision both of these values as necessarily co-existing, mutually inclusive goals in education. It is possible to look more closely at the epistemological theories that have driven some of us to conclude that teachers should be both nurturing caregivers as well as knowledgeable instructors for their students.

We find ourselves now thrust into the arena of epistemology, or the philosophical study of theories about knowledge. Unfortunately, there are as many

theories about knowledge as there are spokes on a wheel; philosophers have always debated the merits of every epistemological world-view they have encountered. We cannot hope to resolve such debate, nor completely review the merits of each competing theory in its turn. The intention in this study is to explore service learning in higher education as one pedagogical method in particular that brings both of the educational values of nurturing caregivers and knowledgeable instructors together.

The paradigm shift in education invoked by service learning lies beyond simple curricular adjustment; it resides in questions about who we are and how we shall live our lives with others. The challenge, so well observed by de Tocqueville (1945) and eloquently elaborated by Bellah (Bellah, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985) resides essentially in the tension between understanding the self as an individual and understanding the larger global community. Our educational experiences need to help us to think about this tension and to navigate through its seemingly paradoxical choices. Perceiving ourselves as partners with our students in the learning process means we must concede that we do not, after all, know everything.

However, traditional models of education have tended to lend educators an appearance of omniscience that does not empower students to think on their own. Engaging students in service learning represents a shift from the model of teacher as the ultimate authority, and provides instead a model of education that empowers students to find their own answers through critical reflection. Palmer (1987, 1998) has suggested that student perceptions regarding teachers' authority has mistakenly represented teachers as a voice that cannot be questioned. That perception of authority is one of the

reasons why our students are so reticent to engage us in meaningful discussion (Freire, 1972; Sylwester, 1994).

In service learning, students and teachers share reflections about their experiences in community, and create a space for what Freire (1972) called "shared understanding" that is arrived at by a collaboration between students and teacher. Part of Freire's (1972) solution to this dilemma regarding the perceived distance between student and teacher is explained by his "problem-posing" method: "Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the-students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers" (p. 67). In this method, we see the generation of a holistic perception of self as efficacious for both teacher and students, insofar as each of our identities is inclusive of the others with whom we share this learning environment. Noddings (1984) also contrasts separate and holistic (or in her terms, "caring") approaches to teaching:

> Suppose, for example, that I am a teacher who loves mathematics. I encounter a student who is doing poorly, and I decide to have a talk with him. He tells me that he hates mathematics. I do not begin with dazzling performances designed to intrigue him or to change his attitude. I begin, as nearly as I can, with the view from his eyes- Mathematics is bleak, jumbled, scary, boring, boring, boring. From that point on, we struggle together with it. (pp. 15-16)

Palmer (1987) asserts that to build community and holistic perceptions of self-efficacy we must shift the educational paradigm by rethinking the ways we teach and the ways we engage our students. Service learning provides us ample opportunities to "engage" students in a myriad of ways that are not possible in the classroom. It also challenges us

to change the societal and university paradigm from a strategy of competitiveness to one of collaboration, from a perspective of scarcity to one of sufficiency and inclusion, and from a stance that looks for expedient solutions to one that engages and commits to a series of values and a way of life.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to further articulate and clarify the relationship between student involvement in service learning courses and student perceptions of self-efficacy and personal obligation with regard to community and public service. Service learning recognizes that students learn through a variety of educational environments and that their unique and individual perspectives can contribute greatly to the learning and teaching environment in the classroom (Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991; Larrabee, 1993). This promotion of students' active participation in the learning process has implications for how the evaluation of an active learning process might be approached. Within this context, as a means to determine the impact of service learning, there should be some assessment of the attitudes and skills which students exhibit as a result of their experiential engagement with community service. For example, a sociology professor might use service learning as a vehicle to reinforce lessons about the relationship between personal income and quality of health care, while a philosophy professor might use service learning to teach about the meaning and limits of the concepts of charity and altruism (Kraft, 1996; Stanton, 1994).

Furthermore, since the character of the experience for students provided on a given campus is a product of the varied talents and backgrounds of the faculty and administrators employed there, the wide range of approaches makes it virtually

impossible to develop measures of learning that would apply equally well across institutions. If, for instance, a group of students attains a low score on a test of mathematics, is the low score attributable to their failure to do the numerical calculations accurately, to their inability to comprehend the underlying mathematical processes involved, to reading deficiencies that keep them from understanding the nature of the problem to be solved, or to some combination of these factors? Many academics would agree that today's measuring instruments and methods are also inadequate to the task of showing student progress over time (Armstrong, 1994; Rhoads, 1997; Wiggins, 1989).

With respect to the development of service learning programs, Palmer (1998) suggests that we need to take more risks as teachers. Taking more risks means we are willing to change our routine, willing to take a new path together with our students. In fact, sometimes there simply is no path readily available before we enter the classroom or the community. We might, on any given occasion, need to be prepared to cut a path through the jungle of ideas with them (and without the final destination already in mind).

This promotion of students' active participation in the learning process has implications for how the evaluation of the service learning process might be approached (Ruffin, 1989; Wuthnow, 1995). Within this context, and as a means to determine the impact of service learning, there should be some assessment of the attitudes and skills that students exhibit as a result of their experimental engagement with community service. Because service learning incorporates such a wide range of teaching and learning options, it requires a broadening of the evaluation process for measuring

academic success.

Methodology

In choosing a qualitative research agenda for this study, it was important to note the difficulty inherent in finding an unambiguous statement of how such an interpretive inquiry should proceed. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that qualitative research in education is derived from many methods, such as ethnography, action research, case study, sociometry, and historiography (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) emphasize this point: "Qualitative inquiry is an umbrella term for various philosophical orientations to interpretive research" (p. 9).

Interview transcripts, open-ended surveys, field notes from participant observation, student journals, and documents collected in conjunction with the various service projects form the entire data base for the study. Once collected, the data were read repeatedly in an effort to identify important and relevant themes. The process followed the kind of analytical strategy stressed in the work of cultural anthropologists and interpretivists (Rosaldo, 1989). Specifically, themes were identified based on their contextual significance and relevance for understanding the context of service learning and how such activities might challenge students' understanding of self-efficacy in relation to community.

Delimitations

The scope of this study is limited to undergraduate service learning projects offered at a private, liberal arts university located in southern Ohio. In keeping with the overwhelming majority of literature in the field, I am operationally defining service learning as a form of experiential learning that intentionally connects some community

service experience with academic coursework (Tierney, 1993; Unger, 1994; Zlotkowski, 1995). Although it is usually associated most strongly with the social dimensions of learning, service learning is also lauded for its potential to enhance academic rigor and increase student learning (Geocaris, 1996; Hashway, 1988, 1990). In this study, the use of the term "self-efficacy" is limited to the relationship between attitudes of personal autonomy and one's perception of empowerment in community. By "empowerment" I mean the ability to enable, or help facilitate, change. This definition of self-efficacy is reiterated implicitly in the service learning literature (Astin, 1993; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Giles & Eyler, 1994).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Self-Efficacy as a Psychological Concept

Just before the turn of the last century, psychology started gaining regard in academic circles as a social science field of study. The earliest psychologists relied heavily on the concept of self-reflection and introspection, and the role that introspection about belief systems played in human conduct. However, classical conditioning experiments by the Russian psychologist Ivan Pavlov and American psychologists like Watson and Skinner would soon replace that initial interest in reflective introspection. Behaviorism, by embracing both classical and operant conditioning techniques, would dominate the field of American psychology for more than half of the century. For example, radical behaviorism dismissed the concept of self reflection as an "unscientific model" for understanding human behavior (Schunk, 1991). Instead, behaviorism relied exclusively on behaviors that could be observed, as in an experimental setting (Bjork, 1993).

Noted behavioral psychologists such as J. B. Watson and B. F. Skinner had given the public hope that a science of human development was not far from our future. But that promise lost some of its appeal during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s,

when there was a renewed interest in understanding the self (Schunk, 1991). Behaviorism had not been able to answer lingering questions that psychologists had about and internal motivational forces, particularly with reference to the importance of a system of self-evaluation. Humanistic psychologists, dissatisfied with the direction that behavioral psychology had taken, called for renewed attention to inner experience and introspection. Taking the lead among this new wave of psychologists were Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, and Albert Bandura (Brodbeck, 1962).

Within this group of social psychologists, Bandura was one of the most influential voices calling for a new perspective in the understanding of self-beliefs. With the publication of "Self-efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change," an article that is now considered pivotal in self-efficacy research, Bandura (1977) argued that individuals create and develop self-perceptions of capability that become instrumental to the control they are able to exercise over their environments. According to Bandura, self-perceptions, which he called beliefs of self-efficacy, help determine what individuals do with the knowledge and skills they have. During the past three decades, self-efficacy beliefs have received increasing attention in educational research, primarily in the area of academic motivation (Pintrich & Schunk, 1995).

According to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, individuals possess a system of self-evaluation that enables them to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings, motivation, and action. Through self-reflection, individuals evaluate their own experiences and thought processes. Bandura (1977, 1986) argued that our capacity for self-reflection is the most unique characteristic that we possess as human beings. Self-reflective judgments include perceptions of self-efficacy, which he

described as the belief in one's capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations.

Bandura's pivotal article and subsequent research (1977, 1986, 1997) presented an integrative theoretical framework to explain psychological changes achieved by different modes of treatment. For example, according to Bandura (1977), expectations of personal self-efficacy determine how much effort a person will expend to achieve certain tasks, and how long that effort would be sustained in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences. In his proposed model (1997), expectations of personal efficacy are described as initiating from four sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states.

With respect to the first source of self-efficacy, the manner in which performance accomplishments are received has an influence on an individual's self-efficacy expectations and actions (Schunk, 1991). Involvement in a service learning project, for example, can raise self-efficacy beliefs when the project stakeholders indicate satisfaction with the project's benefits to the community. In the social environment, such issues as job discrimination, racism, prejudice, and gender or age discrimination can have the opposite effect and lower self-efficacy beliefs. Whether such experiences reinforce or promote low levels of self-efficacy depends upon the individual's perceptions and whether or not the perceived barriers are overcome (Pintrich & Schunk, 1995).

The second source of self-efficacy, vicarious experience, suggests that beliefs are often acquired through observation and interpretation. In observing the modeling behavior of others, the learner is able to reflect on past experiences with those behaviors

and understand their relevance in a new situation (Ames, 1992). The third source of self-efficacy, verbal persuasion, suggests that beliefs about self are influenced by all the verbal messages conveyed by others. Encouragement from others supports self-efficacy; criticism hampers it. Attending to the verbal cues received in a community service setting will most often provide students with positive attitudes related to self-efficacy, especially when the service learning projects involve one-to-one engagement with community partners (Cairn & Cairn, 1999; Mabry, 1998).

Bandura's (1997) final source of self-efficacy considers the impact of physiological states on introspective beliefs, and understands stress and anxiety as having a negative effect on self-efficacy. In their research on the impact of stress and anxiety on neural brain activity, Caine and Caine (1990) note: "The brain learns optimally when appropriately challenged, but downshifts under perceived threat" (p. 68). An examination of Bandura's four variables and their influence on self-efficacy expectations suggests that efficacy-based educational strategies must increase the range of students' experiences and promote the personal and contextual factors that lead to high levels of self-efficacy (Ames, 1992). In other words, we need to embrace strategies that help students to develop positive self-efficacy expectations.

This study will attempt to demonstrate that service learning is such a strategy. For example, through participation in service learning, positive self-efficacy expectations are demonstrated by outcomes that can be translated into action, reflected in skill development, and realized through proper mentoring (Mabry, 1998). In service learning courses, the instructor's primary role is that of coach and facilitator. As such, the instructor may model a behavior, demonstrate a procedure, or role-play a situation

to help students understand a concept. Observation responses, performance reviews, and peer feedback are often used in service learning courses because such strategies offer encouragement to the student (Cairn & Cairn, 1999; Herdman, 1994). Researchers have investigated a range of developmental areas including cognition, moral values, and even self-identity among students (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). They have examined the impact of socialization on students' attitudes and retention rates, and they identified faculty and peers as important agents of influence for student development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Noddings (1992, 1995) asserted that the academic programs of most universities have lost touch with the integrative ideal of education, noting that the primary focus of classroom instruction is intellectual development, while students' major personal concerns are dealt with outside of class. Additionally, Peterson and Deal (1998) have argued that universities' most powerful influence on students' choices are felt outside the classroom. Boyer (1983, 1987) stated that the most important teaching goes on outside the classroom, and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) concluded that additional study of experiential learning components, like service learning, will support these methods as valuable learning tools for educational leaders.

Self-efficacy is strengthened by identifying, valuing, and utilizing dispositions such as: acknowledging how thought affects actions; believing in one's ability to succeed; accepting responsibility for personal actions; becoming more receptive to a diversity of cultural values; and believing in the necessity for collaboration and cooperation with other members of one's community (Pintrich & Schunk, 1995; Urdan

& Maehr, 1995). Participation in service learning can be most beneficial in helping students become more aware of these dispositions.

For example, encouraging self-reflection through reflective journals, focused discussions, and shared, open dialogue with others will help students to express the underlying beliefs about self that affect their desire to participate in a variety of service learning challenges. The contribution of service learning toward enhancing students' perceptions of self-efficacy is embedded in reflection. Reflective journals, peer reviews, class discussions, and shared dialogues all provide students opportunities to make meaning of what they have learned about their own values and belief system (Hashway, 1988, 1990; Hullfish & Smith, 1961).

One of the primary goals of assessment in service learning is personal empowerment for students; journals that contain students' selected insights on their community service work, for example, allow students to reflect on their performances, compare current with prior work, and recognize their potential for continued growth. Hashway (1990) notes that feedback that is directed to a student's progress rather than to a comparison with other classmates' work offers guidance for future learning rather than discouragement by emphasizing inadequacies. Participation in service learning provides a rich opportunity for such feedback to be developed, and thereby also enhances students' perceptions of self-efficacy.

Review of Service Learning Programs in Higher Education

In higher education, the usual focus of community service on college campuses has been to help local neighbors and to promote participatory citizenship, but today more college faculty are incorporating service activities into all the academic

disciplines. The influence this national movement has had on the academy is most apparent in the growth of organizations such as Campus Compact and Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) whose memberships and influence increased dramatically in the early 1990s (Troppe, 1995). Further, in 1997 the call for proposals from the American Association for Higher Education Conference on Faculty Roles and Rewards specifically identified an interest in how community service and service learning contribute to a more engaged faculty.

The educational landscape of the past 20 years reveals a series of patterns, themes, and educational initiatives that have created a philosophical curricular trend that is changing the way we think about learning. While the "sage on the stage" is still the common pedagogical mode, other philosophies of learning are now present on college campuses in the form of learning communities, general education programs, experiential learning programs, women's studies programs, ethnic studies programs, service learning projects, undergraduate research, and ethics centers. These enabling, democratic initiatives are flourishing even as the public demands more evidence of competency and as access becomes more problematic (Stanton, 1994; Troppe, 1995).

Present in all types of institutions, these programs are used for different types of institutional renewal and contribute directly to a civic stance within the university and at the intersection of university and community: they teach important leadership skills by incorporating collaborative learning experiences within classes. They also shift the locus of authority from the teacher to the interactions among teacher, student, and other resources; they imbed in the curriculum ideas of social justice, community responsibility, and respect for difference. For example, learning communities

intentionally restructure the course unit through different types of linkages or connections and engage faculty and students in re-conceptualizing social, economic, political, and multicultural issues.

Student retention in learning communities is high because students feel they are active participants in their education. They can confront each other, create meaning jointly with other students and faculty, and discover and experience how group work deepens individual insight. Learning communities move students and faculty into a collaborative learning arena. Faculty members are appreciative of the opportunity to discover new connections across disciplines and to break out of the isolating class unit. These experiences can translate into other community efforts, breaking down the idea of learning alone, being alone, teaching alone.

Many general education programs now address issues such as social responsibility, ethical action, gender politics, multi-culturalism, and global awareness (Beane, 1998; Delve, Mintz, & Stewart, 1990). For example, in Occidental College's general education program, which is called "Cultural Studies," students take such courses as "Women of Color in the United States," "Technology and Culture," and "The Great Migrations." In these classes and through their assignments, students study issues of race, gender, and class, as well as the social, political, and economic realities in California and in the United States as a whole. Engaging in difficult dialogues about race, class, and gender, they are learning a more complex view of civic responsibility and engagement that connects them vitally with our nation's most important issues.

Service learning also promotes interdisciplinary education. Although most curricula are organized by discipline, service experiences, when linked to academic

coursework, challenge students to integrate learning across disciplines (Herdman, 1994; Sills-Briegel, Fisk, & Dunlop, 1996). For example, by tutoring at a women's shelter, a secondary education major satisfying a service requirement in a methods course will learn much more than the pedagogy of teaching low-income students. The student will be learning, implicitly at least, something about the history of the welfare state, the politics of legislation to protect women, the management of nonprofit agencies, the psychology of abuse, and the sociology of the family. Service learning promotes issue-oriented, interdisciplinary education and engages students in the deliberate, often arduous, process of problem solving (Parker, 1997; Savoie & Hughes, 1994; Wolk, 1994).

In the late 1980s, three state Compacts (California, Michigan, and Pennsylvania) were formed to strengthen and focus the work of the national Campus Compact. In Michigan, the Kellogg Foundation, through Campus Compact, provided an initial 3-year grant to five founding colleges and universities to assist the institutions in developing community activities: math hotlines, tutoring programs, high school athletic support programs, service learning fairs, community clean-ups, and a variety of mentoring programs. There are now 36 state Compacts, funded by campus dues and grants from local and national foundations, with memberships in each state consisting of diverse groups of institutions.

A 3-year grant from the Ford Foundation launched one of the main emphases of Campus Compact, to link academic study with service learning. In the early 1990s, Campus Compact sponsored three summer institutes in which 40 institutions of all types; private research universities, public state universities, private colleges, and 2-year

institutions came together to plan such programs and to learn how to facilitate active service learning. These projects included not only the development of service learning resource centers on college campuses, but ways to involve and support faculty who wanted to teach courses with service learning components.

The impact Campus Compact has had on the curriculum and on changing the thinking within the university and the community is impressive. In its most recent Sourcebook for Community Service in Higher Education, Campus Compact lists dozens of exemplary programs and courses that further its mission. An example is the course entitled "Community Service 101" at California State University-Fresno, in which 700 students enrolled in 1998-99, and contributed approximately 25,000 hours of community service. This course and others like it at many universities provide a space for reflection on community-service experiences and enable students to integrate their external learning with on-campus issues.

Over the past 10 years, general education programs, learning communities, and other types of curricular reform that are focused on engaging faculty and students on hundreds of college campuses in building community responsibility have been supported by major grants from the U.S. Department of Education including the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and from the National Science Foundation. Learning in community not only strengthens our educational vitality and decreases alienation in the educational workplace, but prepares students to be competent leaders in professional work environments (Astin, 1979; Kobrin & Mareth, 1996).

In Oregon, Portland State University (PSU), by building on the community service model, has created a 4-year comprehensive general education program that is interdisciplinary and community based, and is linked to the university's distinctive urban mission. The involvement of all academic programs with community service projects is what makes the school's mission distinctive, according to Kobrin and Mareth (1996). Viewed as an educational philosophy, service learning enriches the content areas of knowledge by promoting the lessons of social responsibility, multi-cultural understanding, and an appreciation of diversity in a pluralistic society (Cairn & Cairn, 1999; Thompson, 1995).

For the past 12 years, the Washington Center for the Improvement of Undergraduate Education has engaged almost all of the universities, independent colleges, and community colleges in the state of Washington to promote educational reform in the context of civic and social responsibility. The center has sponsored important conferences on learning communities, critical thinking, diversity, and curricular reform. Administrators and faculty have participated in sessions to assess learning and to take the learning into the community.

When the Kellogg Foundation established its funding area in philanthropy and service learning several years ago, it supported the important work of Campus Compact, an organization founded in 1985 by the presidents of Brown, Georgetown, and Stanford Universities and the Education Commission of the States to promote community service and civic responsibility on college campuses in response to public perceptions of students as materialistic and self-consumed. The Kellogg Foundation established a new Kellogg Commission that "will help U.S. colleges and universities define the directions

that higher education should go in the future and recommend an action agenda to hasten the change process" (Miller & Steele, 1995, p. 21). The topics the commission will address include increasing access to higher education for all members of society and establishing new outreach programs for students that allow more learning to take place in a community setting (Miller & Steele, 1995). This transformational servant-leadership at the highest level of universities, foundations, and national associations reflects the priority that service learning has become for higher education in the 1990s.

Within the curricula on college and university campuses are hundreds of courses that specifically include service learning components. Titles such as "Service, Economics, and the Community" (Nazareth College of Rochester), "Philosophy of Service" (Andrews University, Michigan), and "Community Involvement" (Breyard Community College, Florida) are only a few that convey this direction. At Swarthmore College, according to its course catalogues, a course entitled "Community Politics and Internship Seminar" "examines the meaning of American democracy in the face of persuasive injustice and inequality...through public service internships, dialogue with local activists, community building within the class, reading assignments, journal writing, field trips and group exercises" (Miller & Steel, 1995, p. 32). Clearly, students work in community with faculty to expand their knowledge and their connections to the world.

At Lansing Community College, "The Student Leadership Academy" combines classroom learning with hands-on experience in community service and leadership positions, and at St. Cloud State University, a new "Master's Program in Social

Responsibility" prepares students for the practice of social responsibility from Western and non-Western perspectives. The goals of the program, which are strong, idealistic, and framed in terms of civic virtue, help students to understand and utilize the scholarship and intellectual thought of women and various cultural groups for greater social responsibility; develop greater sensitivity to the values of a multicultural and ever-changing world and teach others this sensitivity for greater social responsibility (Miller & Steele, 1995).

The International and National Voluntary Service Training (INVST) program at the University of Colorado is a 2-year leadership program providing perspectives on global development, non-violent social change, conflict resolution, and community problem solving on issues such as poverty, racism and social justice. Students commit to at least 2 years of community service following their graduation from the program. The Corporation for National Service cites this program as a national model. There are now several hundred programs that engage students in specific projects at most major higher education institutions.

Projects on the environment are carried out at institutions such as Alverno College, Whitman College, Brown University, University of South Carolina, Wheaton College (MA), and SUNY Binghamton. Projects on hunger are under way at institutions such as Pace University, Morris Brown College, Grinnell College, Frostburg State University, and University of Hawaii Kapiolani Community College. And projects on voting issues are in operation at institutions such as Bradley University, Pima Community College, University of Miami, Brevard Community College, University of Southern California, and UCLA.

Some statistics on the involvement of campuses in public service are equally impressive. The number of Campus Compact member institutions from 1995 to 1996 was 512 (Beane, 1998; Krystal, 1998). Of these institutions, 74% offer service learning courses, 30% consider faculty service in tenure evaluation, 41% conduct research on public service issues, and 92% mention civic responsibility or service in their missions (Clark, 1998). Over 540,000 students participated in service learning in 1998-99 in areas such as health, literacy, housing, homelessness, and education. Clearly these students, faculty, administrators, and community members are joining together around important community and academic agendas.

This work in public service has opened up the exciting concept of an auxiliary or co-curricular transcript, such as those used at Rollins College and Bradford College, to place the civic and social activities within a larger academic framework. This somewhat new idea (Alverno College has been a leader in promoting a similar concept, values-based education, for almost two decades) asserts that grades reflect only a small part of a student's record of academic accomplishment. Articulating clearly the competencies that students can bring to a work situation expands conceptions of higher education and links civic and social awareness with professional achievement.

The influence of the Ford Foundation over the past decade in support of the changes in our society and on our campuses is reflected in the writings and accomplishments of a project the foundation helped fund: the American Commitments Project of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Through dozens of grants to colleges and universities, presentations at regional and national conferences, and publications and public dialogue, AAC&U through its American

Commitments Project has promoted the re-envisioning of general education, community service, multiculturalism, and gender studies on hundreds of campuses.

Two colleges have developed service learning programs with the help of AAC&U grants. At Hobart and William Smith Colleges, students participate in a Community Service House and through their service learning skills of mediation, conflict resolution, and positive action around issues of inter-culturalism and pluralism. Pitzer College's service learning requirement stipulates that students engage in one semester of community service woven through a course or independent study. In courses such as "Social Responsibility and Community" or "The Violence of Intimate Relationships," students develop a social and ethical perspective by working as mentors, interns, or assistants.

Projects such as these represent new hope to American higher education, because they will provide hundreds of thousands of participating students, faculty, and community partners with opportunities to interact across generations and cultures and to build new bridges to historically undervalued and under-represented members of the community (Stanton, 1994). In providing these opportunities, American colleges and universities are making a new commitment and issuing a call to what the American Civic Forum (1994) has referred to as a new citizenship. AAC&U and the Ford Foundation are changing the way we think about our work in educational leadership by articulating an educational stance of social responsibility in a pluralistic society. Such foundations have provided grants for curricular and institutional renewal, and have supported workshops designed to promote the partnership between campus and community.

Kellogg's National Leadership Program, now more than 10 years old, provides 3-year leadership fellowships to faculty, administrators, and public officials who construct learning plans for social, political, or academic change. A framing concept for the fellowship program is Greenleaf's (1970) idea of the "servant-leader." Greenleaf (1970) wrote that leadership emerges from a "natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first" (p. 12). Servant-leadership is healing, intuitive, and compassionate and promotes a stance that looks to the future while caring intensely about the present. The Greenleaf Center in Indianapolis has taken up the work of its namesake to promote programs that foster civic virtue. Such programs as "Servant-Leadership," "Team Spirit," "Personal Journey through Servant-Leadership," and "Servant-Leadership: A Foundation for Effective Organizational Change" are open to faculty, administrators, and citizens to help reframe the ways we think about ourselves as leaders.

Through these and other programs, students find themselves in a variety of field experiences, as well as undergraduate research, community service, and social projects. In many ways, and on many campuses, students are invited to learn by doing and to reflect on their learning with faculty and other students. It is an exciting time to be a student, and an exciting time to be a faculty member. Our educational landscape has been ignited by a "common fire" of civic involvement and change, and much of the leadership and support for the new civic responsibility has come from the major American foundations.

Assessment of Service Learning

There are several studies that suggest that service learning is an effective teaching tool, both in terms of understanding course content and also for encouraging

critical self-reflection of student values and beliefs. Markus, Howard, and King (1993) conducted a comparative course section study of a large undergraduate political science course at the University of Michigan. They compared students in service learning sections of the course to students in more traditional discussion sections of the course. Their results suggest that service learning can enhance students' intellectual development. In addition to having an influence on their personal values and orientations toward their community, the researchers also found that academic learning was markedly improved by participation in course-relevant community service.

Service learning is not known for its efficiency in transmitting large blocks of empirical information, which is probably still best facilitated in a classroom. However, it does serve to counter the abstractness of much classroom instruction. For example, students in a medical ethics class might first disseminate theoretical positions espoused by leading scholars, and then follow up those classroom discussions about abstract theory with visits to patients in a hospice facility. In this regard, Markus and his colleagues point out that colleges and universities will value community service to the extent that it directly benefits students academically. They advocate for the integration of service learning with traditional classroom instruction. Markus, Howard and King (1993) assert: "The kinds of service activities in which students participate should be selected so that they will illustrate, affirm, extend and challenge material presented in readings and lectures" (p. 417). Reflection and discussion about service experiences must be a part of class meetings in order that students may better process and "de-brief" about their shared field experiences.

The larger implications of their research are an insistence that community service is important in higher education because of its educational benefits and a critique of traditional "top-down" approaches to learning or an "information-assimilation model." In such a model, students learn through abstraction rather than through direct experience. The information-assimilation model can transmit large volumes of information quickly and coherently but doesn't prove especially useful in helping students with long-term retention of information (Freire, 1972). What is at issue here is also the definition of knowledge. In other words, if you learn something for a test but then have no memory of it in 6 months - or even 6 weeks later, can you really claim to *know* anything about that subject?

Boss (1994) also compared students in two sections of an undergraduate ethics course. The only significant difference in the way the sections were taught was community service experience. Boss assessed both the content learning of the students, and then, with the assistance from a developmental psychologist, used James Rest's Defining Issues Test to measure gains in moral reasoning. She found that the group of students engaged in service learning had a slightly better grasp of the course content and made significantly greater gains in moral reasoning than their counterparts in the traditional classroom section.

Some researchers using final course grades to measure student learning have found that service learning students achieve higher outcomes than comparable non-service learning students (Cairn & Cairn, 1999; Markus et al., 1993). However, other studies have failed to replicate these results (Kendrick, 1996; Miller, 1994). Miller (1994) examined two undergraduate courses, social and developmental psychology,

with a service learning option for each course. Contrary to the researcher's predictions, course grades were not significantly different between the two groups. Kendrick (1996) compared service learning and control sections in an introductory sociology course. Students in the service learning section completed 20 hours of field work in community social service agencies, whereas control students read articles from the *New York Times* designed to help them apply course concepts to real world occurrences. Course grades did not differ between service learning and non-service learning students.

Cairn and Cairn (1999) reported higher self-report of motivation as well as perceived effectiveness of service learning as a learning tool from students engaged in experiential projects than from students engaged in non-experiential projects. Although Kendrick (1996) did not find overall differences between service learning and non-service learning students in course grades, he did find that service learning students demonstrated higher achievement on essay exams (but not multiple-choice exams) and a greater ability to apply course concepts than did traditional students. Kendrick concluded that perhaps "service learning promotes quality of thought, even though it may not improve knowledge content" (p. 79).

Similarly, Hesser (1995) compared students' test performance in a Child Development course who took the course when service learning was included, with students who took the course before service learning was included, and found that service learning students performed higher on essay exam questions (but not on multiple-choice questions) than did non-service learning students. Reviewing the research on cognitive outcomes suggests that students often report an increase in learning from participation in service learning, but that objective measures have

provided inconclusive support for the claim that service learning promotes improved course material learning over alternative assignments.

Another reason researchers give for valuing and promoting service learning is the recognition that field work can be and is often exploitative of the community being studied (Rosaldo, 1989; Shanker, 1990). Academics studying a particular community must ask the local people for their time and resources. The researcher returns to his or her institution to write books and thereby earn career promotions as a result of his or her study without any real benefit accruing to those who have cooperated in the study (Astin, 1979, 1993; Weisman, 1993). But when they and their students contribute through service in practical and real ways to the community as they learn from it, they are to some extent balancing the relationship and the interaction.

In order for our students to cope with and be able to manage their futures, they will need to do far more than simply know about their world. They must develop the skills and processes of critical and reflective thinking and of social inquiry gained through experience, and they must be able to ask really tough questions. But none of this will be achieved unless the educational leaders of today accept their responsibility to encourage and support the development of the skills of critical and reflective thinking (Crabbe, 1989; Zlotkowski, 1995). For many educators, nurturing citizens who will be full participants in the democratic process is a primary impetus for their commitment to service learning. Engle and Ochoa (1988) called for a "new citizenship" that emerges from grassroots community efforts and is active and participatory:

> In America, profound political changes come not from political elites but from an engaged citizenry. Adapting our national institutions, private and public, to

> the new realities we face is a task well beyond the capacity of government. It is not for technocrats or a professional political class. It is the job of all Americans, exercising our sovereign power as citizens. (p. 8)

This assessment suggests, in part, what the citizen of the future will have to do to be productive, effective, and able to function within an ever changing society. Educational leaders must also reach out to work more closely with the communities of which they are a part, and to connect students in our schools with the broader communities in which they live and will eventually work.

Theoretical Framework: Introduction

As we have previously seen, service learning is not really a new approach to education. Historically, we know that teachers have a long tradition of incorporating community service activities as a means of enhancing the learning experience for students. In the formative stages of many American institutions of higher education, it was expected that both professors and students would be actively engaged in projects that would help improve their neighboring communities, as well as efforts extended beyond close geographic boundaries (Chopp, 1986). Educators recognize that higher education has had, over centuries of history and tradition, a number of purposes including transmission of cultural heritage, the training of professionals, and the generation of new knowledge through research. For example, the history of Spellman College, beginning in 1881, is replete with stories of students being sent to neighboring communities to teach a range of skills from hygiene to literacy. These projects were incorporated as part of their formal coursework, and represent some of our earliest and best practices in a historical tracing of service learning pedagogy.

At the core of this pedagogy is the assumption that formal educational processes (learning and teaching in the classroom) can be enriched by non-schooling experiences, and vice versa. Many educators are stating unequivocally that foremost among the purposes is that of giving young adults the skills and breadth of knowledge to think deeply about the structures of the society, and to appropriate values which must govern their personal and professional lives (Boyer, 1987; Chopp, 1986). Service learning pedagogy recognizes that students learn through a variety of educational environments, and that their unique and individual perspectives can contribute greatly to the learning and teaching environment in the classroom (Beane, 1998; Mackenzier, 1983; Oliner & Oliner, 1995).

The pedagogy of service learning reaffirms that as human knowers we are not just passive spectators of the world we come to know. We are involved participants, or as Shakespeare observed, we are actors on the stage of the world. It was one of Dewey's complaints that traditional theories of knowledge make the knower an entity separate from the known, thus erecting barriers between subject and object that could not in any case be overcome. By setting human beings firmly within the natural world, Dewey's theory of naturalistic epistemology attempted to avoid many of the traditional problems of both empirical and rational epistemology. I turn now to the task of justifying the concept of self-efficacy as it is theoretically framed in the naturalistic epistemology of John Dewey. In presenting such an argument, it is important to recognize the epistemological framework which will drive the propositions, particularly the understanding of knowledge as (in some way) the product of social construction.

Theoretical Framework: The Natural Epistemology of John Dewey

In the second quarter of the century Dewey developed a rather unique educational philosophy that made use of both rational and empirical principles. Culbertson (1988) notes that "While he [Dewey] accepted the positivist view that science is centered in experience rather than in metaphysical speculation, he rejected the idea that the study of ideals falls outside scientific inquiry" (p. 11). In *The Quest fro Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action* (1929) Dewey explained "The final reality of educational science is not found in books, nor in experimental laboratories, nor in the class-rooms where it is taught but in the minds of those engaged in directing educational activities" (p. 32). Dewey's work would shape scholarship in education for several decades, before being challenged in the next quarter century by the movement known as logical positivism.

Turning first to his work in naturalistic epistemology, we find that Dewey sets himself against any philosophy that would pose an impassable gulf between knowers and what is known, between subject and object, self and non-self, experience and nature, action and the good. An epistemological corollary of this naturalistic vision in metaphysics is giving up the quest for certainty. All our knowledge is understood to be hypothetical and constantly changing in light of other experiences. The cognitive abilities of the human species, including its capacity for sophisticated science, are to be understood as abilities developed through the evolutionary process. The importance of Dewey's theories of naturalistic epistemology and experiential education is critical in helping us understand the justification for service learning and all forms of experiential learning in general. In fact, we may infer that Dewey (1929) thought the

conceptualization of education as exclusively socially minded or intellectually minded created a very counter-productive polemic:

> The result of one operation will be as good and true an object of knowledge as another, provided it is good at all: provided, that is, it satisfies the conditions which induced the inquiry.... One might even go as far as to say that there are as many kinds of valid knowledge as there are conclusions wherein distinctive operations have been employed to solve the problems set by antecedently experienced situations.... There is no kind of inquiry which has a monopoly of the honorable title of knowledge. (p. 197)

He understood that experience is ultimately social and communal, and also that education is interactive and reciprocal. This means that attention must be given to the interaction between the server and the served in each experience, as well as the connections between past and present experiences. Such a conceptualization of service learning would call for additional development of a model in which the dimensions of theory and practice, and of individuals and society, are joined in curriculum development.

The result seems to Dewey an unpalatable dichotomy: either human experience is not a part of the world of nature at all (as in Descartes' rationalism) or else a Humean arch-empiricism reigns. But neither of those perspectives can do justice to all the variety of experiences that we value and hold dear as meaningful, and which we presume are therefore capable of some degree of knowledge. If we identify science with the physical sciences (as traditionally understood), we will cut ourselves off even from the uses of intelligence in our human experiences, since the strictly empirical understanding of

human intelligence is necessarily restricted to electrical brain-state activity. In fact, Dewey seems to carry on a continuous dialectical debate with empiricism as it is traditionally conceived. Like William James, he believes that pragmatism is a valuable middle ground between the extremes of empiricism and rationalism, incorporating what is best in both. The main problem with these traditional rival epistemological views, he believes, is that each operates with an impoverished notion of what experience is. Dewey (1899) states:

> Empiricism is conceived of as tied up to what has been, or is, "given." But experience in its vital form is experimental, an effort to change the given; it is characterized by projection, by reaching forward into the unknown; connection with a future as its salient trait. The empirical tradition is committed to particularism. Connections and continuities are supposed to be foreign to experience, to be by-products of dubious validity. (p. 23)

As we have seen, experience and knowledge are a matter of interactions between the knower and the known, and neither is left at the end exactly as it was at the beginning. What counts as intelligent intervention, Dewey (1933) holds, is a matter of method. And a method is legitimate if it succeeds in transforming confused situations into clear ones: "The function of reflective thought is to transform a situation in which there is experienced obscurity, doubt, conflict, disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled, [and] harmonious" (p. 100).

The same is true of our values, Dewey believes. Here, too, no certainty is possible, but it does not follow that all values are equally valuable, or that they are all on a par, or that whatever an individual happens to like is therefore worthy of value.

Some views about value are superior to others, and we can improve our opinions about morals and values without demanding absolute certainty. Dewey thinks that intelligence can be as effective in the realms of value and morality as it is in science. Because the basic cognitive situation is the problem situation, and because hypotheses are created to resolve such situations satisfactorily, the concepts involved in hypotheses are necessarily related to our concerns and interests. After all, without interests and concerns there would be no issues or concerns for our contemplation. Ideas, concepts, and terms, then, are intellectual tools we use as long as they serve our purposes and discard when they no longer accomplish that task. They are to be construed as instruments for solving problems.

As an example of such instrumentation, we may cite the role of physicists and chemists in creating concepts that serve the purposes of these sciences: explanation, prediction, and control. However, Dewey would, no doubt, suggest that these concepts no more reveal what the world really is than any other sort of concept does. They too are merely instruments serving certain purposes, and there is nothing prior or more basic about them that should cast a disparaging shadow on concepts which serve other purposes. According to Dewey (1929) many philosophers have been misled in thinking that only empirical science actually reveals the true nature of reality:

> Thus, "science," meaning physical knowledge, became a kind of sanctuary. A religious atmosphere, not to say an idolatrous one, was created. "Science" was set apart; its findings were supposed to have a privileged relation to the real. In fact the painter may know colors as well as the meteorologist; the statesman, educator and dramatist may know human nature as truly as the professional

> psychologist; the farmer may know soils and plants as truly as the botanist and mineralogist. For the criterion of knowledge lies in the method used to secure consequences and not in metaphysical conceptions of the nature of the real. (p. 221)

Dewey's insight suggests that the empiricist's commitment to objectivity has, paradoxically, shunted the very qualities which are manifest in experience away from the realm of knowledge. The empirical conception of knowledge rejected all analyses of experience that included the subjective report of the person having the experience. The rather bizarre conclusion then becomes that only knowledge which is completely devoid of the knower's perspective can "really" be a "truthful" account. Perhaps the apparent conundrum of this view is more obvious to us now in virtue of our growing familiarity with service learning, which regards the subjective knower's perspective as essential to the evaluation of what is known. This element of service learning pedagogy, with regard to the conditions constitutive of knowledge, parallels very closely Dewey's theory of naturalistic epistemology. But let us explore these matters now in more detail.

There is a short story told in Plato's dialogue, *Symposium* (1996) that illustrates a conception of self identity as related to others: Asked to tell his fellow dinner guests about the nature of love, the playwright Aristophanes invents a wonderful fable in which we were all long ago "double-creatures" with two heads, four arms, four legs, and enormous intelligence and arrogance (or what the Greeks called hubris). To teach humans a lesson, Zeus struck the creatures down and cleft them in two - "like an apple" said Aristophanes, so that each resulting half-person now had to walk around the world, searching for her other half. That is the origin of love, concluded Aristophanes; not the

search of one isolated individual for another, but the urge to reunite with someone who is already, as we still say, one's "other half." The complete self, in other words, is not just the individual person.

This ancient Greek recognition that the complete self is not just the individual person is analogous to my understanding of a holistic perception of self-efficacy. Our individual identities are intricately connected to our relationships with others around us, and increasingly, we are coming to understand those others as members of global communities, with whom we share social constructions of meaning. We know, for example, that many psychological theories portray learning as a process of construction (Habermas, 1972; Shanker, 1990). Students can make sense of a concept only if they build it into the structure of their own prior experience, but it is very difficult to create such a structure by oneself, especially in an unfamiliar subject area, and discussion in small groups of peers would make such an undertaking much easier.

Siedman (1991), Searfoss and Enz (1996) have noted that students are usually being exposed to a specialized language when they encounter university disciplines and professional fields. In other words, in learning discipline-specific concepts and terms, students are learning to communicate in a particular form of language, so their grasp of a topic is usually evaluated on the basis of their ability to understand questions and to write cogent answers in that language. However, students are much more likely to develop this linguistic proficiency if they have both informal and formal opportunities to speak in that language, rather than being restricted only to listening and reading.

Yet despite our current understanding of these significant examples of the social constructions of meaning, most college students are still expected to achieve academic

success without actually contributing to that construction. Freire (1972) referred to traditional models of education as a form of banking in which the students are to memorize the contents of knowledge as instructed by the teacher. The banking concept sees the teacher's role as the depositor of knowledge, and the student's role as simply to learn how to best store those deposits for temporary safekeeping and occasional retrieval. Granted, Freire's objections to the banking model have been echoed by many others in higher education over the last three decades. But that traditional model is nonetheless still prevalent (Boyer, 1987) and in some schools it remains the dominant model of teaching.

Because of our evolving understanding of knowledge as dynamic and inter-relational rather than static, the banking model Freire described over 30 years ago is seriously flawed (Wynne & Walberg, 1995). But how do we, as educational leaders, move away from that entrenched model of teaching? What can we do to help facilitate a shared learning environment in which students and teachers both learn and teach together? One way is the promotion of a self-efficacy concept, which would diminish the current stronghold of the old educational model, and bring the two experiences of teaching and learning together. In the traditional educational model of separation, the student tries to look at the material through the teacher's eyes. In contrast, the holistically-defined teacher tries to see things from the student's point of view. Noddings (1984) suggests that the holistically-defined teacher acts "as if for herself, but in the interests of the student's projects, realizing that the student is ... a subject and not a subordinate" (p. 177). There is no expectation that the students become independent thinkers through executing the teacher's own projects (and only in our own terms).

Facilitating a shared learning environment in which students and teachers both learn and teach together is strikingly similar to the research technique known as participant observation. Participant-observers maintain "a dynamic tension" between the separate stance of an individual observer and the holistic, subjective stance of a participant. Carroll (1990) found the participant observation method to feel somewhat "risky" as a result of that tension. While researching friendships among patients in a mental hospital, she felt herself to be in the uncomfortable position of being neither truly attached nor truly detached from her subjects, and thus remained a stranger in the process. However, she later modified her own role as participant observer by perceiving herself as "temporarily affiliated" with her subjects, which she believed to be more conducive to the "human mutuality" that needed to take place between the researcher and the subjects.

In this model, the researchers tend to act as short-term partners with the subjects, giving them a chance to tell their own stories (in their own words) and also providing feedback to them. For a brief period, like our role with our own students, the researcher and subject meet on a shared footing, each "truly being with the other" (Carroll, 1990). Noddings (1995) describes the relationship between caring teachers and their students in similar terms:

> I do not need to establish a lasting, time-consuming personal relationship with every student. What I must do is to be totally and nonselectively present to the student - to each student - as he addresses me. The time interval may be brief but the encounter is total. (p. 180)

What Noddings has described as "care" and Carroll described as "mutually human" both get at the heart of my understanding of the holistic perception of self; it is a self who recognizes personal identity both in terms of one's own values and also the values of the others with whom one is engaged (even if only for the brief period of an academic semester).

Parker Palmer (1993, 1998) invites us to take risks with our students, in order for them to really see the cognitive process at work rather than only seeing the polished version which is our final result (and the only one we typically present in lecture). In other words, we need to alter our own perceptual framework in order to engage those students in the gestation period when knowledge begins. If we don't want to just pour the knowledge in, we need to start letting them mix the fluids themselves. This may sound like risky business, but our own reticence to bring students into the process of knowledge formation is an example of the tacit value we have harbored for that old banking model. It is only when we can begin to perceive ourselves and our students as joint partners that we will be better equipped to actually practice what we have been preaching in higher education. If we can achieve that partnership, we would be closer to understanding our teaching role as it is defined by our students, and vice versa.

In other words, the more we understand our educational leadership role as one which is holistically related to others, the better educational leaders we will be. Our tacit commitment to the identification of ourselves as private individuals is contrary to our awareness of the social dimensions of the generation of knowledge. But this is not an easy task. After all, each of us probably reached our own pinnacle of academic success the old-fashioned way: we earned it through the painstakingly dull ritual of rote

memorization of some professor's "Six Principles of Economic Recovery" and "Five Stages of Development in American Literature" or "Ten Movements in Contemporary European Metaphysics." In retrospect, we have come to understand that such categories can be expanded to include a variety of expressions and characterizations.

Our perceptual framework needs to be shifted to an angle that permits us to say we were still able to acquire knowledge despite the urbanity of those lists, rather than as their result. That shift in perspective is one of the interesting side effects of adopting a holistic concept of self. For example, when we begin to identify our teacher persona as mutually coexisting with our students, then we can understand ourselves as facilitators of learning *for these particular students*. This is a necessary first realization, if we are to break those old habits that keep us entrenched in the banking model of education.

This question of self-efficacy is one that should concern us, particularly those of us who are attempting some fruitful articulation of what it means to be an educational leader. That old Socratic injunction to "Know thy self" has never been more relevant than it is today, as is the need to better understand ourselves both as individuals and as members of a community. It is a perception of self that must rely more on internalized values and beliefs rather than external, physical symbols of identity. The question before us now is the extent to which service learning helps to facilitate this understanding of these twofold purposes and goals of education by impacting students' holistic perceptions of self-efficacy.

Theoretical Framework: Leadership Strategies for Service Learning

What are the processes that lead to optimal changes for educational leaders in service learning? To answer this question, it is necessary to think about the sort of implementation strategies that will best facilitate change without destroying the integrity of our visions as educational leaders. For example, a strategy to articulate a "vision statement" might be thought of as an expression of our desire to define ourselves in such a way that change can be embraced (and even encouraged) without completely losing the vision of self as also being identified by our past. Of course, the tacit assumption in such strategies is that in the future, educational leaders should closely resemble the way we look in the present (and the way we looked in the past). If this assumption is valid, then a strategy to preserve our sense of vision will need to recognize those features and characteristics which are most often associated with the core values and beliefs which we have espoused. According to O'Toole (1996), these core values represent the tacit moral presuppositions that are the ethical foundation of any vision statement.

While this line of reasoning certainly has merit, especially to those of us who often decry the loss of explicitly expressed values in educational organizations, it is perhaps difficult to know how such espoused values are best manifested by service learning leaders within an organization, especially one which functions within the various restrictive dictates associated with educational organizations. As an example of an implementation strategy that might be initiated within an educational framework, I offer the following normative prescriptions for service learning leadership initiatives, adapted from Nanus (1992):

- The leader's vision should be forward thinking. Leaders who can see beyond the scope of the present needs and interests of a service learning program are necessary because our society values continuous change.
- The vision should represent the ideal. Leaders who can articulate a vision that represents the ideal goals of a service learning program will be more likely to win the support of those on the lowest rung of the educational ladder.
- The vision should be amenable to the program's value system. Leaders must be able to work within the basic parameters of existing educational values; otherwise the vision will be too disruptive to bring about effective change.
- The vision should encourage and support all the program's stakeholders (e.g., students, faculty, staff, and community partners). Leaders who can create an atmosphere of good will and harmony will be more likely to engender enthusiasm for their vision.
- The vision is challenging in its scope. Leaders who have a plan for the future that both expands and enriches the current status quo will be able to generate more optimism for the necessary work that must be done.

This strategy for approaching educational change is similar in many ways to Heifetz (1994), who considers leadership more in terms of a dynamic relationship that exists between persons in particular social structures, rather than as a given set of personality and character traits that are supposed to be the mark of a leader. This inter-relational view of leadership focuses on the issue of accountability by making the followers jointly responsible for the actions of the leader, and encourages both leaders and

followers to think more reflectively about their personal values and how these should guide their actions.

In this picture of leadership in service learning, persons do not become leaders only by virtue of their possession of some particularly desirable set of traits. Their leadership is instead considered to be a function of a pattern of personal moral values that bear some relevant relationship to the characteristics, activities, and goals of the followers. Heifetz (1994) addresses the inter-relational focus of shared responsibility that is required by his concept of adaptive leadership:

> Adaptive situations...tend to demand a more participative mode of operating to shift responsibility to the primary stakeholders. Because the problem lies largely in their attitudes, values, habits, or current relationships, the problem-solving has to take place in their hearts and minds. One produces progress on adaptive problems by working the conflicts within and between the parties. (p. 121)

In other words, we must challenge all those assumptions about the so-called "normal" routines and standard operating procedures that are usually considered to be a given for leaders, like knowing how to "play the game" to align the right support network. Heifetz's (1994) notion of participative operations suggests that the more often all members of the group can be involved with the change process, the less defensive and adversarial they will tend to feel. If individuals in a work group are engaged in gathering information about their particular problems or dilemmas, and are also involved in the evaluation of the information, they are more likely to see the need for change, and to generate enthusiasm for the change. Being involved with each stage of the task orientation has the effect of encouraging everyone to be receptive to new ideas,

and to be motivated to follow through on those suggestions that seem practical, and within the reach of the group.

However, in situations of crisis, there is a tendency to fall back on the leader, that person who has been given the authority to leap ahead of the collaborative group work that is genuinely needed for adaptive change. Heifetz (1994) recognizes this tendency as problematic, especially since our expectations are then raised that the leader should be able to fix the problem and get us out of the crisis mode:

> Authority constrains leadership because in times of distress people expect too much. They form inappropriate dependencies that isolate their authorities behind a mask of knowing. And then everyone rationalizes the dependency...As a result, doubt, the exchange of ideas, weighing contrary values, collaborative work, the testing of vision against competing views, changing one's mind, seem like unaffordable luxuries. (p. 180)

Making matters worse is our expectation that the leader should be able to facilitate the attainment of group goals even if the group was previously deadlocked on the perceived crisis issue. This is what happens when a new leader is brought in to "turn things around," and when she fails to do so in a timely manner she is replaced, if the group has this option. She had her chance but failed to solve the problem, so the group will feel justified in her replacement. Of course a more objective perspective of this situation would presumably lead one to wonder whether or not the group had sincerely engaged in the sort of work that was needed to help facilitate the attainment of their goals. Heifetz (1994) implicitly suggests that leadership theory cannot focus merely on the

leader, but must also be attentive to both the characteristics of particular situations and the followers:

> The accumulation of evil never resides in one person at the top because no one gets to the top without representing the interests of the dominant factions in the system. The evil, if it is evil at all, lives in the routine ways in which people throughout the system collude in maintaining a dysfunctional status quo. Changing the status quo will always require more than simply changing the person of the authority figure. (p. 238)

Heifetz goes on to comment that the adaptive work necessary for goal attainment will require compromise and a willingness to learn by those who are among "the dominant, complacent, and beleaguered" (p. 238). But unfortunately, most people cannot pursue the fulfillment of their life purposes through the process of mass democracy. Our current mass democratic system of government keeps citizens sufficiently preoccupied with concerns they need to have as consumers and clients. We should wonder about these roles that have been pushed on us as citizens, and we should be concerned about our loss of autonomy in the decision-making process with regard to the fulfillment of our human needs.

Many of us may want, but do not perceive an opportunity for, more involvement in that decision-making process. This is particularly true, for example, among most of today's younger generation of teenagers and the 20-something age group. They have been raised in an era satiated with so much political corruption that most of them do not even value their privilege to vote. They are convinced that no matter which political

candidates are elected, corruption will continue to be the standard operating procedure for governmental agencies.

This perception is of course extremely disheartening, but it is one that we must appreciate for its transformative value. We will need to fully recognize how severely impoverished most of our political leaders are in terms of such moral values as stewardship and integrity, but then we also need to understand the extent to which we have been co-conspirators in the arena of political corruption. Without this understanding, we cannot hope to begin the agonizing process of adaptive work that Heifetz (1994) calls for:

> I have proposed that a community can fail to adapt when its people look too hard to their authorities to meet challenges that require changes in their own ways. Indeed, the higher and more persistent distresses accompanying adaptive problems accentuate the dependency dynamic. (p. 262)

Here is a call for changes in our own behavior -- but what kind of changes did Heifetz have in mind? If we recall now his earlier comment that problem solving needs to take place in our hearts and our minds, we can begin to interpret Heifetz as, perhaps, the American Socrates who is implicitly making the same appeal to his community that the Athenian Socrates did, namely, to "know thyself" in order to become an autonomous moral agent.

As we know from reading Plato's *Apology*, which recorded the trial of Plato's mentor, the focus of Socrates' last public encounter with his fellow citizens is centered around his comments on nurturing the soul, which he believed to be the most important part of a human being. It is the soul that must serve as the genuine source of all our

actions, and it is the soul that reveals our true character as a person, according to Socrates. Guided by this belief, he concerned himself always with acting as virtue would require him to act rather than as convenience would dictate. And even in the face of death, Socrates would remind his fellow Athenians that their single-most important task in life was to act in accordance with virtue:

> Someone might say: "Are you not ashamed, Socrates, to have followed the kind of occupation that has led to your being now in danger of death?" However, I should be right to reply to him: "You are wrong, sir, if you think that a man who is any good at all should take into account the risk of life or death; he should look to this only in his actions, whether what he does is right or wrong, whether he is acting like a good or a bad man." (Grube, 1975, 28b-c)

If we were to speculate on the general characteristics that we believed the educational leader should have, could we hope to do any better than to hold the person of Socrates as an example? And there are many others to whom we may point as educational leaders who also listened to both their hearts and their minds for guidance regarding how they should behave as mentors and citizens. For example, Sir Thomas More, the Councilor of England during the reign of Henry VIII, had a peculiar "moral squint" (as Robert Bolt's (1982) famous play *A Man for All Seasons* described it) that allowed him to see his world through the eyes of a keenly moral perception. Sir Thomas More, like Socrates, rejected the conventional mores of his society and of his king, an act for which he too paid with his life. Heifetz understands these sacrifices, and knows that the dangers of moral autonomy are as real for us today as they were for Socrates and More:

> People who lead frequently bear the scars from their efforts to bring about adaptive change. Often they are silenced. On occasion, they are killed...If we want to generate more leadership in our society, we have two options. We can embolden a greater number of people toward heroic effort, and we can investigate ways to lead that reduce the likelihood of personal injury, even to the hero, so that more people can step into the fray. (Heifetz, 1994, p. 235)

Efforts to implement leadership initiatives in service learning in educational organizations will remain a difficult enterprise, but at least we have begun to recognize the necessity for leaders who have the vision to draw connections between their own self identity and the identity of their community (envisioned both locally and globally). Through the recognition of our sense of moral obligation to others, we will be further along on our journey to self-knowledge, and also further along in understanding the commitment demanded of all of us by Heifetz's (1994) notion of adaptive change, which does not require omniscient foresight into what the future holds, but does require a willingness to "learn our way forward." As he concluded: "One may lead perhaps with no more than a question in hand" (p. 276).

Having all the answers is not a prerequisite for good leadership, but asking the right questions certainly is -- and the more reflective those questions are concerning the relationship between moral values and civic responsibility, the better. We may say that taking a critical stance toward society requires not only the ability to point to our shortcomings, but also the ability to contemplate the ideal conditions for our improvement. Without such vision, we are doomed to repetitious passivity, or what Heifetz has called, "work avoidance" (1994). Senge (1990) also recognized the

importance of critical self-reflection for leaders; indeed Senge suggests that "personal mastery" is perhaps the most urgent first step that leaders must take before embarking on any strategy of educational change.

For leaders in service learning who embrace this call to self-reflection, their mental model actually becomes a way of approaching life. What are the perceived strengths of this design? For one thing, an appreciation of one's own self in relation to other connections (both internal and external to the organization) lends itself well to another significant piece of the educational theory literature: namely, the model of servant leadership (Block, 1993). This concept of leadership dispels the myth of the white knight who charges to rescue the dying educational system from the mouth of the dragon. But, Senge's (1990) and Heifetz's (1994) strategies for the applicability of the servant leadership model can also extend beyond the classroom or boardroom and into our homes.

When we become servant leaders in our personal as well as our professional lives, we open ourselves to richer relationships with those persons who carry so much weight in our lives; our children, our parents, our friends, our soul mate. But a word of caution may be important in this context. Being a servant leader does not mean becoming the slave in a master-slave relationship with another person. Servant leaders are simply more likely to recognize the hopes and aspirations of those with whom they are close, and thus are in a better position to offer a haven of comfort for their weary companions in life.

Like a seasoned sojourner, the self-reflective members of an organization who practice servant leadership will find that they are accompanied by a smorgasbord of

interesting people alongside as they travel through life. Of course, they would have missed those fellow sojourners if they had been too self-absorbed in their selfish interests and concerns. They would have missed these others if they had been inattentive to the others' voices and body language. And the servant leaders would have missed the others if they did not understand that their lives were intricately connected to their own, and that what happened to their companions would somehow have an impact on their own lives, even if they were unable to recognize the connection at that particular moment in time.

None of us can manage to survive without those interactions anyway, so why not strive to make the most of them? When we recognize the importance of other people in shaping our own lives, we understand better this business of connections, which is such a crucial component of this design for educational leaders. Being connected to others also has the advantage of encouraging growth in ourselves. If others can see us as artists, dancers, or even as First Chair violinist in a symphony orchestra, then maybe it isn't too late to become one of those things -- we will just need to be more attentive to the reflection of ourselves that we see in others.

Can you imagine how empowering it would be for children in poverty to see themselves through the eyes of teachers who reflect their belief in endless possibilities for these children? Of course, it is not only the thinking that makes it so. We must lean into the task of raising our nation's children from the death-knells of poverty. We must save them, even if only one by one. And we must remember that each of them is also a part of us, connected in ways that only God can truly know.

Theoretical Framework: Why Leaders in Service Learning Must Change

What is change? There is an ostensibly easy way to answer this: we might explain, for example, that if something changes, it becomes different. But then - and here is the problem, if the something that has changed is therefore different as a result, then has it really been changed, or should we rather say that it was *replaced*? In other words, how much can something change (for example, a teacher education program) without completely losing its former identity? How much can something change and still be recognized as this same entity? I believe this is the primary question facing many schools of education today. Because the issue of rapid change is the most influential catalyst facing the global environment of the 21st century, an organization like a private, liberal arts school must find ways to "keep up" with the accelerated pace of change in order to remain economically viable (in other words, in order to keep its doors opened).

Rapid changes are endemic to our contemporary society, and therefore the key question that leaders in service learning need to ask is not "Should we change?" but rather "How much should we change?" and, "How quickly should we change?" The distinction between these last two questions may turn out to be critical, especially since the latter moves our attention to the consideration of time. These two concepts of change and time are related in a fully symbiotic fashion: when we say that the water became ice, for example, we mean that the water existed in some temporal sequence and was changed into ice over some discreetly measurable period of time. Therefore, it may be possible to have educational change occur so slowly that it is almost

imperceptible; or alternatively, the change might occur so quickly that any semblance to the original educational structure is lost in the final product.

However, the examples of change cited above are, perhaps, guilty of presuming the old linear picture of time as occurring in incremental stages of past, present, and future. In other words, to say that the water was changed into ice implies that the water existed prior in time to the ice, and the ice occurred later in time than the water. Those who are addressing this question of change in relation to temporal sequences (Fullan, 1998; Quinn, 1996) emphasize the need to move educational changes quickly, at least as an initial response that would serve to demonstrate a significant "repositioning" within the educational structure. For example, Fullan (1998) stresses the need for change that is rapidly responsive to processes occurring outside of the organization. He argues that educational changes can have real impact, or "deep meaning" only if they are collaborative with change agents external to the organization. Using an educational example, Fullan (1998) argues that internal responses to such change agents should be anticipatory in nature:

> The "out there" is now in here, in your face....Since the "out there" is going to get you anyway, and since if you withdraw it will get you on its own terms, we concluded that the best way to deal with what's "out there" is to move toward the danger. (p. 45)

The anticipatory tone of Fullan's advice certainly seems to imply that quick reaction times should be the standard mode of operation, at least with regard to educational response to the tide of changing forces approaching from the outside. I think the question he wants us to ask ourselves is "Will our organization be the first to meet the

external forces of change, or the last?" Apparently Fullan is convinced that success (or maybe even survival) is not only a function of embracing educational change, but embracing it as soon as possible. However, this ostensibly quick fix prescription for educational success will most likely not unfold without casualties from within the educational strongholds. Indeed, changes that occur too quickly might also introduce unfretted dilemmas that were not internally anticipated.

Quinn (1996) also stresses the importance of moving quickly in relation to educational change, but with perhaps more caution than Fullan's strategy recommends. Like Fullan, Quinn also recognizes the potential risks that are always involved in adaptive, transformative strategies of change. But he argues that the risks must be taken in order to avoid "slow death" and to bring about "deep change." Quinn's idea of deep change requires movement that is truly transformative in an organization rather than merely superficial. Deep change requires educational leaders to practice "walking naked" into uncertainty.

We might compare this strategy to Fullan's suggestion that leaders should "move toward the danger," and yet there does seem to be one important difference between these two leadership strategies: Quinn's advice to walk in uncertainty is clearly more tentative; the naked leaders should walk slowly, perhaps with less aggression than Fullan's rush toward danger would seem to suggest. For Quinn, the idea of "getting lost with confidence" implies that the leaders in service learning must constantly be attentive to what is happening both inside and outside the organization. This strategy, with its more tentative stance, seems preferable to Fullan's less cautionary advice to aggressively advance toward educational change in service learning. It is this tentative

stance that led to the selection of a qualitative research agenda that would provide the most opportunity for interpretive inquiry of the impact of service learning on perceptions of self-efficacy for both students and faculty engaged with service learning pedagogy.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this study was to further articulate and clarify the relationship between student involvement in service learning courses and student perceptions of self-efficacy and personal obligation with regard to community and public service. This study represents a qualitative case study methodology. As a case study, the procedures followed for data collection and analysis were bound by the particular individuals and institutional setting observed (Merriam, 1988). Since a critical question of the study was to understand how students perceive themselves as efficacious with respect to their community service projects, the case study methodology best facilitated that question by "revealing the meaning of phenomena for the participants" (Newman & Benz, 1998, p. 65). Merriam (1988) also notes that case studies yield contextual knowledge that is best understood to be interpreted through the reader's experience, and are therefore more compatible with the "natural" understanding of data.

Another important aspect of the case study methodology is the openness of the researcher to allow for unstructured and spontaneous data collection (Krathwohl, 1998). As a qualitative case study, the interviews and observations were framed by a target of interest, namely, student perceptions of self-efficacy and personal obligation with regard to community and public service. However, while the interviews and observations were framed by this target of interest, it was also important to remain open

to emergent data (Merriam, 1988). Although this study is not an ethnography in the strictest sense of the term (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990), it is nonetheless ethnographic in its focus on the relationships between students and community members involved in various service learning projects (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). As ethnography, the study is an interpretive portrayal of the multiple perceptions of the subjects involved (Merriam, 1988; Shank, 1994). Merriam (1988) sees the primary challenge in such studies to be one of determining the value of the multiple perceptions, and to decide which perceptions are most representative of the cultural reality observed.

This study is also ethnological, insofar as it includes a comparative analysis of multiple subject groups: (1) those students and community members participating in various service learning projects, (2) the students participating in the focus groups after completion of the projects, and (3) the faculty involved with service learning within their courses. According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993) this distinction between single and multiple entities of subject groups is what most anthropologists consider to be the primary difference between ethnography and ethnology.

Following the eclectic model of incorporating more than one research design (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Patton, 1990; Pelto & Pelto, 1978), elements of these three designs (case study, ethnography and ethnology) were used for this study. According to Jaeger (1988) an eclectic use of methodologies affords greater range of creativity in producing the best research design, and such an approach is also gaining regard in the academic community. For example, Eisner and Peshkin (1990) concluded that the blurring of disciplinary boundaries over the past few decades has encouraged the acceptance of eclectic research design.

Setting

The interviews and surveys used in this study were all conducted on the campus of the University of Dayton, in Dayton, Ohio. The University of Dayton is a small, private, liberal arts school founded by the Society of Mary, a Roman Catholic order. The Marianists have traditionally been committed "to educating the whole person and to linking learning and scholarship with leadership and service" (*University of Dayton Bulletin*, 2002, p. 11). Of the five focus group sessions used in this study, one was conducted on the university campus (in Liberty Hall) and the remaining four were conducted at a private residence in West Carrollton, Ohio, approximately 20 minutes from the campus. The private residence was chosen in order to provide a more relaxed atmosphere for discussion and dinner with the student participants.

Participants

The faculty and instructional staff selected for interviews were chosen from a list provided by the Institute for Neighborhood and Community Leadership at the University of Dayton (INCLUDE). The list included tenured and non-tenured faculty and part-time instructional staff who had been involved with service learning through various departments within the university. Some of the faculty and instructional staff selected for interviews were long-time service learning practitioners, while others were first-time novice practitioners. All faculty and instructional staff names supplied by the INCLUDE office were persons who had been involved with at least one service learning project over the course of one semester. The student interviewers conducted 18 interviews over a period of 6 weeks, with 7 female and 11 male faculty and instructional staff within the following academic departments: Communications, Business,

Philosophy, Earth Sciences, Political Science, Sociology, Religion, and Health and Sports Science.

Of the 18 total interviews conducted, 8 were with tenured faculty, and 6 were with part-time instructional staff. The remaining 4 male interviewees were non-tenured full-time faculty. Seven of the 8 tenured faculty interviewed were males, and all 6 of the part-time instructional staff interviewed were females. In addition to faculty and instructional staff interview participants, 16 seniors and 4 graduate students were selected for focus group discussions, and 20 first and second-year students were selected for open-ended survey observations. The criteria for student participants are detailed further below.

Strategies for Sampling

Because the process of selecting students was dependent on their previous involvement with service learning in discipline-specific courses, the parameters for selection of focus group members needed to be narrowly prescribed. A process of data collection that is dependent on such a narrow specificity of subjects is known as purposive or theoretical sampling (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990), and it is the most common method used for selecting research participants who meet some information need or provide special access. This narrowly prescribed criterion of previous involvement with service learning in discipline-specific courses was used as the primary filter for the selection of focus group members. The minimal criterion was defined as student participation in at least 15 hours of community service specifically related to an academic course.

Additionally, the connection between the community service and the academic course would need to have been explicitly stated by the student. Several strategies were employed by faculty that met this criterion of student explication (e.g., student papers, journals, exams, and presentations served to demonstrate explicit links between community service experience and academic course objectives). By conducting this purposive sampling, I was able to cross reference the data with student comments that had been gathered from other campus sources over the previous 3 years.

Selection criteria for the study's subject groups included considerations based on conceptual parameters imposed by the research problem (e.g., changes in perceptions of self-efficacy as impacted by participation in service learning among liberal arts college students). Also important were pragmatic considerations, such as the availability of students and faculty to meet at certain times, and the geographic proximity of the communities involved with the service learning projects. According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993) these logistical and conceptual descriptors for the population of the study act as a delimitation of boundaries because "they distinguish between people to be studied and those to be excluded from consideration" (p. 59). While such selection criteria are not representative of a true sample of the population, there is no necessity to sample probabilistically in eclectic research designs (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Pelto & Pelto, 1978).

The participants in this study were artificially bounded as individuals sharing common attributes important to the purpose of the study (Patton, 1990; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). However, the participants were also naturally bounded with respect to associations that are independent of this specific research study. For example, while

the faculty participants selected for the interviews were artificially bounded as practitioners of service learning pedagogy in their academic courses, they were also naturally bounded through their association with each other as university faculty at the same school.

Data Collection Procedures

Since the method of data collection for this study relied on purposive sampling rather than probabilistic sampling, it was prudent to use triangulation of data collection from three separate sources as a means to increase the study's internal reliability (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation means collecting different kinds of data that bear on an issue so that each can be used to cross-check and throw light on the others (Patton, 1990). Ideally, the results of each kind of data analysis will corroborate the others, thus allowing the overall findings to be presented with greater confidence (Jaeger, 1988). Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide a useful simile for triangulation in comparing it to a fisherman casting several nets into the water. Each net may have some torn spots, but collectively the several nets can work in tandem to catch the fish. The "fish" I wanted to catch would be data that would help to further elucidate my question regarding service learning and its impact on perceptions of self as efficacious in relation to community.

However, because I am strongly committed to the explicit purpose and goals of the study with respect to the impact of service learning, I needed to be concerned with the very real possibility that I might selectively interpret data that best supported the purpose and goals of the study. Therefore, I chose to include multiple observers who had no personal interest in confirming or rejecting the explicit purpose and goals of the

study, and solicited help from a disinterested faculty colleague for the selection of these other observers. Such an approach would afford greater control for researcher bias (Newman & Benz, 1998).

Many researchers suggest that collecting and analyzing three different kinds of data is usually sufficient to validate the research project (Denzin & Linclon, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Traditionally, the most common kinds of data that are triangulated are interviews, observations, and document review or surveys. My data collection consisted of faculty interviews, focus group observations with students, and a student questionnaire. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argue that the strongest internal validity will require data triangulation that uses multiple sources of data across time, space, and persons. Therefore, this study included all three prongs of triangulation: multiple sources of data, multiple investigators, and multiple methods for gathering the data.

As the primary researcher in this study, the degree of my own participation in the generation of data varied greatly, as determined by the data gathering procedure. For example, my role as participant was more pronounced in the actual field delivery of the service learning projects that were conducted for the study. In several instances, I acted as liaison for both the student service learners involved in the projects and the members of the community. However, my role as participant was far less pronounced in the small focus groups with students, in which case the data gathering procedure was intended to capture the students' reflections and insights in the aftermath of the service learning projects with which they were engaged. In the focus group setting, my role as research observer was therefore primary to my role as research participant.

The legitimacy of the dual role of researcher as both participant and observer is one which Erickson (1986) verified as having received mainstream acceptance in educational research. Erickson (1986) suggests that the use of participant observation is particularly relevant for research concerned with generating "interest in human meaning in social life and its elicitation and exposition by the researcher" (p. 119). The strategies used for data gathering in this study also relied on both interactive and non-interactive models of research methods (Pelto & Pelto, 1978). The interactive model yields data that are collected as the result of interaction between the researcher and the participants. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) note that the non-interactive model yields data that "necessitate little or no interaction between investigator and participant" (p. 159). Because I acted as participant observer in the field delivery of the service learning projects, and, to a lesser extent, in the focus group sessions with students, this study represents an interactive strategy for data collection.

Procedure for Faculty Interviews

The faculty interview protocol followed Patton's (1990) model of the standardized open-ended interview. This model calls for a structured set of questions that will be uniformly delivered to all interview respondents. The interviews with faculty also followed established guidelines for key-informant interviewing in as much as the selection process was based on the special access and "key" knowledge associated with the study (LeCompete & Preissle, 1993; Mishler, 1986; Siedman, 1991).

The typology of questions selected for the faculty interviews was based on two of the six categories developed by Patton (1990). The first of these categories is

described as experience and behavior questions, which are intended to find out what the interview respondents have engaged in as special activities related to the study. The second category of questions developed for this study represents the third of Patton's (1990) categories, which he describes as opinion and value questions. In this study, this kind of question was designed to address the normative judgments made by faculty respondents with respect to the experiences and behaviors noted in the first category. In this sense, the first type of question may be viewed as primarily descriptive, while the second type of question may be called prescriptive. In the former, the information sought is a function of describing particular details relative to the actual service learning projects, while the latter typology of questions called for more subjective evaluation of the experience in terms of perceptions of the impact of the projects.

Seven sophomore and junior level students from two sections of a communications class were invited to conduct face-to-face interviews with various faculty members regarding their involvement with service learning in their respective disciplines. The communications students who acted as interviewers were not involved with the service learning projects of these faculty members, and had no apparent vested interest in the promotion of service learning pedagogy. These 7 student interviewers were also not involved with the final coding and interpretation of data, although they were exclusively responsible for the initial collection of the data gathered during the faculty interviews (see Appendix A for sample faculty interview form). In this way, additional data were collected that were independent of the original set collected through the use of student questionnaires and small focus groups. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) note that there are many contradictions in the educational research

literature regarding the best interview and survey protocols, and they suggest that researchers should therefore develop an interviewing and survey framework that will be most consistent with the goals of their research project.

Procedure for Focus Group Observations

In addition to the development of a survey for faculty interviews, this study also relied on observations of small focus groups with students who had participated in service learning projects within an academic course. In January 2002, I started inviting seniors and graduate students to participate in several small group discussions about their views on service learning and its impact for our current students. These discussions were conducted over a 6-month period, and usually involved 4 to 5 students and myself. In all, 16 seniors and 4 graduate students were participants in the small group dialogues. The shortest amount of time we spent in conversation was 80 minutes, and the longest session was 140 minutes. Some of these conversations included sharing dinner, and all of the sessions were conducted as very informal gatherings. By including graduates from the two previous years I was able to provide a longitudinal perspective and also draw on a greater variety of experiences.

Because circular seating helps to facilitate more spontaneous responses and interchange (Patton, 1990) the sessions were conducted in facilities which could accommodate circular seating arrangements. Focus interviews frequently start broadly and then target the questions to the area of interest. This also provides participants with some lead time to collect their thoughts before speaking, so the responses are often more considered than in an individual interview. However, in a focus group setting, responses may also be more carefully censored than in individual interviews. At the

same time, when one person speaks out on a sensitive issue, it releases the inhibitions of others who might not do so in a one-to-one situation. As an additional benefit with respect to participant spontaneity, it is also important to note that the moderator in a focus group does not have the same level of control over the direction of the discussion as does the individual interviewer (Krueger, 1988).

In the focus group setting, my primary goal was to elicit narratives from the students that were uninterrupted by the researcher. There were two primary questions posed to the focus groups: (1) How did involvement in service learning influence your discipline-specific coursework? (2) How did involvement in service learning influence you personally? The second of these questions was intentionally vague. Not wanting to influence their responses by articulating the concept of a holistic perception of self-efficacy, I posed the question with an open end regarding their own concept of "personal." Mishler (1986) recommends this strategy of eliciting subject narratives as a means to gather participant data that are less influenced by the researcher. This narrative survey method of data collection may also have therapeutic value for the participants because they are encouraged to reflect openly, and without detailed cues and structure imposed by the researcher (Mishler, 1986; Siedman, 1991).

Tandem note taking was used during the focus group discussions in order to increase the rater reliability of the evidence collected (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). By asking one of the participants to keep notes on the key points of the conversation, I was able to have "a second read" of the setting, as Pintrich and Schunk (1995) recommend. The tandem approach also helped to increase accuracy of questioning

because help was available for rephrasing of ambiguous questions and replies, which greatly simplified recording and coding (Pintrich & Schunk, 1995).

Analysis of the Data

Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend that initial coding of data should begin as soon as possible after the data have been collected. However, the first step I took was to make three sets of copies of all the data notes, interview forms, and student questionnaires. This step was taken in order to provide each independent reader the opportunity to approach the data "fresh" (i.e., prior to any additional notes or comments being added by the researcher). While the data sets were not stacked in any particular manner with respect to dates gathered, for example, each set was numbered by page number after being collated. The assignment of page numbers to the data sets provided the potential for later readings in reverse. My rationale for this approach was informed by many years of experience in grading student papers, from which I learned that the order in which the papers are read may affect my subsequent evaluation of the work.

For example, I have found that by reading all papers through the first time and assigning a grade in light pencil marking for each one, I am better able to recognize the influence of reading order when I read the papers a second time, but intentionally reversing the order. Therefore, in approaching the data sets in this study for the first time, I assumed that the order in which I read them might influence my initial responses. While there can obviously be only one initial "fresh" approach to the data, making note of the reading order allowed for others to approach the data for the first time through the lens of another reading order. This strategy is not meant to suggest that

one reading order is preferable to another, but rather is meant to recognize the manner in which interpretations of data sets can be influenced by such factors.

The analysis of the data collected through small focus groups and faculty interviews was based on two stages of coding by three raters with the researcher and two independent readers. The consistency of the coding was checked across data samples by ensuring that two independent readers could use the same coding framework as the researcher and arrive at similarly constructed conclusions. One of the independent readers was familiar with the service learning paradigm before checking for the consistency of the coding. The second independent reader was not affiliated with education, and had no previous knowledge of the service learning paradigm.

Initial codes were established after the first review of data collected from both the focus group meetings and the faculty interviews. Each of the two independent readers were provided 3 x 5 index cards that were numbered to correspond to each page of their data set. They were then instructed to indicate those words, phrases, or sentences that best reflected their understanding of self-efficacy as defined by Bandura (see Appendix B for instructions provided for independent readers). In the process of focused coding, the initial codes are categorized according to labels that reflect the language of participant responses (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). These various aspects of the research environment are then connected to the participant responses in order to recognize the focus codes, which are the second phase of this coding method.

This second stage of the coding analysis is process-oriented rather than product oriented. In other words, there is an expectation that the categories will be woven together to suggest new questions and comparisons to existing data collections

(Newman & Benz, 1998; Siedman, 1991). According to Newman & Benz (1998) this two-stage analysis of data, with the use of both initial and focused coding, may provide more validity than traditional empirical research coding of open-ended questions. For the empirical researcher's analysis of similar data collections, the categories are derived without the benefit of resifting the initial codes.

Using A Quilting Metaphor for Focused Coding

Many researchers claim that "understanding" is more pertinent to qualitative research than "validity" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When the time came to interpret the data and report the findings in this study, that distinction between understanding and validity became an important consideration for me. I realized that there were no standardized formulas that could be applied to the data, as would have been the case in a quantitative research design. In the process of trying to come up with a schema for categorizing data, I actually found myself growing nostalgic for the established procedures of quantitative research such as efforts of replication, use of control groups, and all those varied standardized formulas that yield, at least on the surface, tidy reports on the findings of a study.

What evolved in this study is a report of findings based on shared, inter-subjective interpretations of the data. I decided to use the Appalachian tradition of quilting as a metaphor for this report of findings, with loose blocks of colored paper representing the individual categories of data, and the variety of patterns in a quilt representing the constant comparison of those blocks of data. The notion of using metaphors to guide data interpretation is not new (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Using this quilting metaphor helped me to remain aware of my role in the "patterning" of this

study. For example, was I imposing my own pattern or design onto the blocks of data, or was I allowing the blocks to unfold their own design based on the manner in which the pieces would best fit together? According to Patton (1990) an inductive analysis of the findings in the study means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis "emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis" (p. 390).

For the comparison of data blocks, the faculty interview data represented the first category of blocks, which was assigned white squares of construction paper. The focus group data represented the second category of blocks, which was assigned red squares of construction paper. The survey data from student questionnaires represented the third and final category of data blocks, which was assigned blue squares of construction paper. At this point, the "quilt" of data blocks had only an artificially imposed pattern, which resulted from my initial grouping of the squares based on their distinct categories of data collection (i.e., the squares were placed together based on their color). I realized that I needed to discover what relationship existed between the various blocks of colored paper, so I started to reorganize the data blocks into piles according to their "look alike, feel alike" qualities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This process yielded a pattern that looked more like a crazy quilt, since the colors (which represented the three categories of data blocks) were no longer artificially bound by their "look," but were now being organized into groupings based on their "feel" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). After this second refinement of data blocks, it became apparent to me that such pattern changes could continue to emerge, ad infinitum, unless I reached some point at which the emergent pattern yielded some sense of completion.

This was a disturbing realization because it meant that "completion" might also be indicative of my over-saturation with the data blocks, or worse, desensitization to the subtleties that might still be hidden by a more intricate pattern that I could fail to see emerging. However, Patton (1990) further explains that "The qualitative analyst's effort at uncovering patterns, themes, and categories is a creative process that requires making carefully considered judgments about what is really significant and meaningful in the data" (p. 406).

My findings for the study are perceived as a result of a shared and inter-subjective process of understanding "the meaning of the data" (Patton, 1990), and are offered as an expression of the particularized experiences reported in this study. This awareness of the social construction of such findings is representative of what Denzin and Lincoln (1994) refer to as an anti-functionalist position toward reports on the findings of a study. In other words, as a functionalist, my approach to data analysis would require a narrower lens that sought primarily to understand the *function* of the data. For example, if in the data set there appeared to be a considerable number of references to some particular artifact, such as a wristwatch, then as a functionalist I would approach that data by associating its meaning primarily with its ostensible function, namely, as being in some way related to the process of recording time.

However, this strictly functionalist approach to the interpretation of data may be ignoring other more salient social factors that would better describe the meaning of these references to a wristwatch. For example, the timepiece references collected as data may have been invoked metaphorically by the respondents, who intended for its meaning to be understood as a reference to gross materialism and affluence. In this

hypothetical context, the watch references represent a socially constructed reflection of the group's familiarity with this artifact as a symbol of consumer wealth rather than as a (functional) instrument to measure time. Thus, as a functionalist researcher, I would have misconstrued the meaning of the data in this case. There were three primary themes that emerged from this process of focused coding. Through the use of a quilting metaphor, the common themes that emerged across all three data sets were identified as (1) perception of benefit to communities through service learning, (2) perception of identity clarification with community, and (3) a connection between academic theory and experiential practice. Each of these themes, and their connection to perceptions of self-efficacy, is discussed in further detail in chapter IV.

Limitations of the Study

The following is a brief overview of some concerns I recognize for this study:

- The influence of between-group factors that might impact the data collection was not recognized until the final stages of data analysis. For example, some comments from one focus group session were duplicated within that particular group but not in other sessions. This leads me to consider the potential impact of between-group factors that were not identified prior to the data collection procedures.
- Historical factors and geographic location were not weighed as factors impacting the data collection in the focus groups. For example, the focus group sessions conducted in early 2002 may have been affected by the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001.

- Attention to a potentially important variable was missing from some initial data collection strategies. For example, I neglected to record the names of those faculty and instructional staff who were mentors for the service learning projects of students in the focus groups. This information may have been useful in helping me understand the impact that individual faculty mentors have on their students involved with service learning. While this question was not the focus of this study, in hindsight I view it as a missed opportunity for further insights that may have been gleaned from the data collection strategies.
- Those faculty and instructional staff who did not use service learning were not interviewed, and therefore important data regarding perceived deterrents to using service learning were not collected for this study.

CHAPTER IV

REPORT OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to further articulate and clarify the relationship between student involvement in service learning courses and student perceptions of self-efficacy and personal obligation with regard to community and public service. Service learning was operationally defined as a form of experiential learning that intentionally connects some community service experience with academic coursework (Unger, 1994; Wolk, 1994; Zlotkowski, 1995). In this study, the use of the term "self-efficacy" was limited to the relationship between attitudes of personal autonomy and one's perception of empowerment in community. "Empowerment" was meant to convey the ability to enable, or help facilitate, change. This definition of self-efficacy is reiterated implicitly in the service learning literature (Astin, 1993; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Giles & Eyler 1994) and is in keeping with Bandura's (1977) definition of self-efficacy, which describes this concept as the belief in our ability to organize and execute actions that are needed to manage prospective situations.

Interview transcripts, field notes from participant observation, student journals, and documents collected in conjunction with the various service projects form the entire data base for the study. Themes were identified based on their contextual significance and relevance for understanding the context of service learning and how such activities might challenge students' understanding of self-efficacy in relation to community. This

study identified and interpreted three themes that may contribute to an understanding of this relationship between participation in service learning and enhanced perceptions of self-efficacy and empowerment in community. Analysis of the data yielded the following common themes: perception of benefit to communities through service learning, perception of identity clarification with community, and a connection between academic theory and experiential practice. Each of these themes, and their connection to perceptions of self-efficacy, is discussed in further detail below.

Theme I: Perception of Benefit to Communities through Service Learning

An analysis of all three data sets collected from faculty interviews, focus group observations, and survey comments from service learning projects, revealed a common concern with personal and community interactions and the impact of those interactions upon individual and community functioning. This common concern among the study's participants regarding the impact of their actions on the community points to a critical feature of self-efficacy, which Bandura (1977) described as the belief in one's ability to "manage" prospective interactions with others in community.

For example, one student commented: "My family doesn't get why I want to go back there [to the service learning project site] because they don't understand all the good that can come of it." And another student said: "This [service learning experience] shows that one person can make a difference, even though I never thought that before." For both of these students, there was a change in their belief system from a sense of helplessness with regard to their ability to benefit the community through service to a sense of self-efficacy and control. This finding is also confirmed by Urdan and Maehr (1995) who contrast perceptions of self-efficacy with perceptions of

helplessness, and understand the latter as anathema to social change. This is because perceptions of helplessness lead to apathy regarding changes in society. When we do not believe that we can actually make a difference, we are more inclined to ignore what is happening around us, as a kind of defense mechanism to protect us from the intensity of those feelings of helplessness (Delve, Mintz, & Stewart, 1990).

Although feelings of helplessness are often associated with perceptions of low self-esteem, Pintrich and Schunk (1995) note that one may feel helpless with respect to a particular situation without necessarily suffering from a loss of self-esteem. For example, one may readily admit a lack of talent in music without necessarily suffering from any loss of self-esteem on that account. If musical talent is not considered to be important, then lack of self-efficacy here will not impugn a judgment of self-worth. However, if one regards musical ability as an important attribute, then the lack of ability here would definitely impact one's sense of self-esteem.

According to Pintrich and Schunk (1995), there is often some confusion regarding the distinction between self-efficacy and self-esteem. Self-efficacy is a judgment of capability to perform a task or engage in an activity, and as such it is a concept that includes perceptions of task-orientation (Bandura, 1977). On the other hand, self-esteem is a personal evaluation of one's self that includes feelings of self-worth. Self-efficacy is a judgment of one's own confidence with respect to particular activities or tasks; self-esteem is a judgment of self-worth (Pintrich & Schunk, 1995). While the concepts of self-efficacy and self-esteem may seem to be closely connected, there would appear to be no fixed relationship between one's beliefs about what one can or cannot do and whether one feels positively or negatively about oneself.

Urdan and Maehr (1995) also contend that strong perceptions of self-efficacy act as a primary motivation for individuals to feel socially responsible for their communities and concerned about the common good. In this study, this contention was evidenced by students' willingness to continue their community service work beyond the requirements of the academic service learning project. For example, one student commented: "Volunteering at the community center allowed me to interact with the neighborhood, and spread the word about the children's after school program. The work there is so rewarding, because you see the adults getting more involved with the children. Everyone should have to do this! That way they can see that we can change things for the better. "

Although some students seemed to feel "helpless" prior to becoming involved with their service learning projects, they later expressed feelings of control with respect to their role in these projects. One student commented: "We did a lot there, but I know I will stay involved now because there is still so much to do." Another student commented: "This project has allowed me to be immersed in a different setting and almost a different culture of people. They made me realize how important it is to appreciate the people in my life. The project helped me to put things into perspective and realize some of my worries are not worth it." And a third student commented: "This service learning project gave me a unique opportunity to experience what I was learning about in class. The residents at the nursing home were so happy to just talk to me, I felt like I had made their day. I feel very fortunate to have participated in the neighborhood project at the nursing home. I went there with no expectation but I should say that I always left with pleasant feelings. This experience has broadened my mind

and given me the chance to meet and make new friends. The people I talked with touched me."

In other words, although some students initially expressed feelings of helplessness, their participation in service learning projects strengthened their perceptions of self-efficacy enough that they subsequently wanted to return for further involvement with community service. This finding is consistent with several studies that followed the participation of students who were involved in more than one service learning project (Geocaris, 1996; Stanton, 1994; Thompson, 1995).

Faculty and instructional staff also expressed perceptions of benefit to community through their involvement with service learning. One faculty member commented in this regard: "We promote these [service learning] projects because our community partners understand the benefit to be gained. In fact, they get it better than most of us do." And another faculty member commented: "Having been involved with this community service work for many years, I see how much this collaboration between my students and the neighborhoods has really helped." These comments from participants demonstrated their desire to understand the members of their community within their social worlds, and to use this understanding to improve those community members' well-being in some regard. For example, Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, and Kerrigan (1996) highlight the importance of intrinsic motivation to learn in promoting transfer, suggesting that one intrinsic motivation predictor is whether the work in which students are engaged will contribute to the well-being of others.

Students with more internal locus of control attribute their success to their own abilities and not to luck or chance, as do persons with an external locus of control

(Miller, 1994; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). When students realize that their thoughts control their actions (i.e., their locus of control is internal), they can positively affect their own beliefs, motivations, and academic performance. This suggestion is also consistent with Eyler and Giles' (1999) finding that students' perceptions that their service learning projects contributed some benefit to the community predicted better service learning outcomes. This study revealed that for these faculty and instructional staff, as well as for these students, there is a common perception that service learning does benefit the communities with whom they collaborated.

Theme II: Perception of Identity Clarification with Community

An analysis of all three data sets collected from faculty interviews, focus group observations, and survey comments from service learning projects, revealed a common perception of greater identity clarification with community. For example, students seemed to strongly identify themselves as related to those members of the community with whom they had recurring contact. One student commented in this regard: "This project has contributed to my growth as a compassionate, understanding, and realistic person...The people I worked with touched me." And another student commented on the tutoring experience as it impacted on her own concept of self as related to community: "For me, tutoring was an eye-opening experience. Thank you for letting me be able to have this experience and for letting me learn a little bit more about myself and what I can give to those around me."

This identification of oneself with community is referred to by Palmer (1993) as a "holistic" perception of self, and is representative of a multi-layered development of self-identity. According to Palmer (1993), these holistic identity clarifications permit

our personal growth to develop toward more altruistic behaviors. Noddings (1984) understands the relationship between self and community as one based on an ethic of care, and suggests that the more caring persons are toward others beyond their immediate families, the more they will identify themselves as being connected to others in their respective communities. This concern for others was echoed by another student involved in an after-school tutoring program: "Although we usually weren't tutoring the kids, I don't feel like our time with them was wasted or useless.....after only one visit, we were considered their 'old' friends. One of the boys would even give us hugs."

Another student commented about the bond she established with some elderly patients she visited in a residential care facility: "I feel that they trust me and feel that they can talk to me....I feel that I have created a trusting relationship with a few that hardly ever talked to anyone." Another student commented that "Working as a tutor made me feel like I really accomplished something. I knew I had done something not only for the children, but also for myself." This bonding phenomenon was not atypical in most of the service learning experiences, and is consistent with several studies that analyzed the impact of service learning on relationships between students and community clients served through some collaborative community-based project (Krystal, 1998; Oliner & Oliner, 1995). This increased sense of relation to community was also echoed by another student: "This was an incredibly worthwhile experience. I remembered a lot about what it means to really care for children, all children, not just the little ones that I am lucky enough to be related to."

Participation in service learning was an experience that lent itself to intensely personal identity clarification for some of the students. For example, a student who was

part of a week-long immersion project during spring break reflected about identity issues and her participation in the project: "I just don't know quite who I am yet. I'm struggling to figure it all out. These kinds of experiences help." Another student added: "Getting involved in community service helps me to get back in touch with who I really am. It reminds me that I have more to live for than just my own interests." A third student offered the following comments: "I believe service is an important part of leadership. I've always done service work, but last term I was totally into myself. I signed up for this project because I wanted to get back in touch with who I really want to be." This student saw the service project as an opportunity to connect with others and in her words "get back in touch" with herself. For her, the service project offered a chance to become more focused on others in community, but at the same time, it also contributed to her own sense of identity.

Several faculty participants also expressed their perception of self as in relation to community. For example, when asked about the connection between his academic coursework and his involvement with service learning, one of the faculty members offered this comment: " It is important to me that students get an appreciation of cultures different from their own. I've made friends out there [in community] that I would not have known otherwise." In answer to the same question regarding the connection between her academic coursework and her involvement with service learning, another faculty member commented: "There are so many differences between us and the clients we serve, and yet we come around to seeing how much we are alike in the end." These comments from faculty suggest that they were committed to promoting

perceptions of self in relation to community as an important aspect of the student learning objectives for their courses.

Theme III: Connection between Academic Theory and Experiential Practice

An analysis of all three data sets collected from faculty interviews, focus group observations, and survey comments from service learning projects, revealed a common regard for the connection between academic theory and experiential practice. Student participants were often systematically engaged in examining and reflecting upon the ways they interacted with other individuals, social groups, clubs, churches, schools, families, neighborhoods, and the larger community environment. In their service learning projects, they examined various social issues including poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, school failure and delinquency, community development, and many other topics.

One student commented in this regard: "The community work we did really helped me to understand the readings like Justice Brennen who said that there are circumstances beyond the control of the poor that work against them - I remembered that quote from one of our essay questions you gave us." This student's comment gets at the heart of Zlotkowski's (1995) description of service learning as a process by which knowledge is socially shared and learning is situation specific. The emphasis in this process is on application of knowledge and skills in the context of real-life experiences, problems, and events (Sills-Briegel, Fisk, & Dunlop, 1996). Students also seemed to appreciate their service learning experience as a way to have contact with "the real world." As one student commented, "Venturing out of my happy and cozy little bubble I live in at UD every other Wednesday has helped me to open my eyes to some pretty

unfortunate situations. Of course, I hear about poverty and education problems on the news or read about it in *Newsweek*, but I realized that you cannot fully understand until you are in that situation yourself." For many students, the experiences they had in community were eye-opening. The experiences enabled the students to see new possibilities for themselves and to more fully understand the patchwork quilt of the human family. One student commented, "I would recommend tutoring to anyone that comes to your class next semester or anywhere on campus. It is a great way to learn about another way of life that you may not have encountered before."

Through their participation in service learning, these students attempted to make sense of the situations with which they are presented and develop strategies for confronting barriers that may arise in the community setting. Participation in service learning equipped the student participants with skills useful in coping with multifaceted problems that face communities, and many of the students attributed an improvement in their understanding of academic material to their experiences with service learning. One student commented in this regard: "In the beginning of the class, I was confused and didn't understand, but as the time went on, things started to make sense. I think this activity and class discussions allowed me to put things together and understand how they relate to each other." This was echoed by another student who commented: "I guess the service projects we did put everything into perspective for me. Some of the issues we read about *are* very important but I never thought about them much before this class."

These student comments are consistent with the principles of good practice and elements of quality instruction found to promote better cognitive outcomes (Eyler &

Giles, 1999; Mabry, 1998). Connecting academic learning to its application in the larger community is considered to be the primary goal of service learning activities, and teamwork, negotiation, leadership, and conflict resolution strategies are encouraged (Clark, 1998; Stanton, 1994). Faculty comments also pointed to an appreciation of the way that service learning helped make their theoretical learning objectives more concrete. For example, one faculty member said that his students' involvement with service learning "helped to put a face on patient care issues" and another faculty member commented that: "They [students] begin to see that real life isn't black and white. They begin to see shades of gray." This comment also demonstrates an understanding of the contextual nature of knowledge, as it was framed by Dewey's natural epistemology.

This understanding of the role that context plays in knowledge formation is, I believe, one of the more salient features of service learning. Troppe (1995) described this as service learning's ability to function as a blending of barriers. What I take them to mean is that service learning often engages students in community situations for which there is no absolute right or wrong response. It is essential that we understand the value of these situations in raising concepts and principles relevant to the academic subject matter that reflects "real-life" issues for the students and their community.

Although faculty insights like these are difficult to translate directly into cognitive outcomes, it is clear that students perceive they are getting more out of service learning than simply being better able to recite a discipline's "facts." Directions for how to improve cognitive outcome measures can be gleaned from recent work on learning from the cognitive sciences, particularly recent studies in brain research (Cairn & Cairn,

1999). The increased learning that students report is not the same as reproducing the instructor's knowledge, which is often what traditional evaluation instruments measure (Freire, 1972; Palmer, 1998).

In traditional classrooms, students are most often evaluated based on the knowledge that they gain from the teacher as expert (Freire, 1972; Palmer, 1998). Iin service learning classrooms, by contrast, students must be evaluated based on cognitive and behavioral gains that they make in integrating their knowledge and experience. In this kind of learning environment, the student may serve as the initiator of learning, and the teacher may serve primarily as the facilitator. As noted by Crabbe (1989) and Miller (1994), cognitive skill-based outcomes are not easily captured by traditional assessment instruments, which tend to test recall of factual content as selected by the teacher.

Most of the intellectual outcomes we might expect from service learning can be thought of as processes of operation rather than as measures of accumulated facts. Driscoll et al. (1996) noted that assessment of the benefits of a liberal education are too often concerned with quick measurements that tend to usurp a deeper assessment for the meaningful content of what a liberal education can provide. The process of learning is, indeed, much more complicated than the traditional notion of learning as an accumulation of facts. For example, cognitive theorists now understand that at each stage of learning more than one question or problem occurs within the learner's mind (Parker, 1997; Sylwester, 1994). There is seldom a one-to-one correspondence between the answers obtained and the questions raised. Furthermore, the questions may be reflective, and relate to the answers obtained at earlier stages before the learner became skeptical of those answers. This cognitive understanding of "delayed learning" (Mabry,

1998) is further evidence for the need to conduct longitudinal studies on the impact of service learning.

Why Faculty Choose Service Learning

To better understand who successfully influences faculty to use service learning, service learning faculty and instructional staff were asked to indicate who directly or indirectly encouraged them, and the importance of each source of encouragement in their decision. Respondents indicated that they most frequently received support and encouragement from two sources: first, other faculty members within their own departments, and second, from their students. In the face to face interviews conducted with faculty and instructional staff, several respondents elaborated on the importance of student requests to use service learning. As one faculty respondent explained, "Students have indicated that service learning is very important to them as part of their college experience." Another respondent said that some of his students had expressed their appreciation for the service learning project as "the greatest experience I've had so far [in college]."

Several faculty respondents indicated that internal motivation and concern for student learning were key factors influencing their use of service learning in their academic courses. One respondent commented, "I do not do it [service learning] for personal reward. My primary motivation is the successful learning of course objectives by students in alternative ways." Similarly, another observed that: "Service learning requires faculty to gain rewards from personal commitment to student learning and community involvement." Other faculty respondents noted that external rewards such as praise from students or institutional recognition were not primary motivators for them to

use service learning. Although several faculty respondents suggested that external factors such as institutional recognition, release time, or additional stipends might help to promote the adoption of service learning for some of their colleagues, none of the respondents identified such factors as important considerations for their own involvement with service learning. In this regard, one respondent commented, "You should not do service learning to get good evaluations because they [students] might not realize learning until after the course is over." Another respondent noted that colleagues do not always appreciate the amount of effort that service learning entails, "Others [peer faculty] do not often recognize everything involved with such a [service learning] project."

In this study, faculty valued internal more than external factors when choosing to incorporate service learning into their academic coursework. This finding is consistent with Hammond (1994), who found that factors influencing faculty to use service learning were also related to student course-based learning, including relevance to course materials and improved student learning outcomes, such as improving analytical skills and problem-solving skills. The findings for this study are consistent with Hesser (1995), who found that faculty members use service learning because they value active models of learning and experiential learning in general. Some research suggests that faculty involvement in service learning is more likely to occur if efforts to integrate service learning into the curriculum are initiated by other faculty rather than an administrative led initiative (Hesser, 1995; Troppe, 1995). For this reason, many university service learning centers provide resources for faculty who initiate their own service learning projects.

Discussion

Finally, to reiterate briefly an overview of the results of this study:

- Both student and faculty participants perceived some benefit to communities through their involvement with service learning.
- Both student and faculty participants perceived stronger identity clarification with other members of the communities through their involvement with service learning.
- Both student and faculty participants perceived connections between academic theory and experiential practice through their involvement with service learning.
- The faculty and instructional staff involved with service learning were motivated primarily by intrinsic considerations rather than external rewards or professional recognition of their efforts to adopt service learning pedagogy.

Several recent studies have addressed the issues of faculty motivation and perceived deterrents in adopting the service learning pedagogy (Hesser, 1995; Kobrin & Mareth, 1996; Mabry, 1998; Rhoads, 1997). Even more of the recent research in service learning has been focused on the question of enhanced academic performance, and how participation in service learning affects academic achievement. However, very few studies in recent years have examined both faculty and student practitioners simultaneously, and fewer still have compared faculty and student perceptions regarding the value of service learning in higher education.

This study serves to diminish this gap in research that currently exists between the impact of service learning as perceived by faculty and the impact of service learning as perceived by students. In comparing data collected from faculty interviews with data collected from student focus groups, this study found an emergent pattern of a shared

conceptual framework between our service learning faculty and our student practitioners. The conceptual framework that emerged as a shared understanding between faculty and students is threefold: the belief that service learning projects deliver some measure of quantifiable benefit to the community partners involved with service learning; a perception of identity clarification with community through involvement with service learning; and a belief that academic theory and experiential practice are connected by involvement with service learning.

What makes this finding of particular interest is its kinship to our definition of self-efficacy, which focused on the relationship between attitudes of personal autonomy and one's perception of empowerment in community (i.e., the ability to enable, or help facilitate, change). This definition of self-efficacy is also implied in other studies (Astin, 1993; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Giles & Eyler 1994). This finding of a shared conceptual framework with respect to student and faculty perceptions of self-efficacy is also of particular interest in this study because it emerged from unlikely responses to two of the questions directed to students and faculty. For example, one of the questions asked during the faculty interview was "How do you think these [service learning] activities help your students to learn your course material better?" and during the focus group sessions, students were asked "How did your involvement in service learning influence your discipline-specific coursework?"

Yet, despite an unambiguous search for the degree of academic learning that both of these questions imply, *none* of the student or faculty respondents focused on academic learning when answering these two questions. Both groups of respondents (faculty and students) focused instead on the impact that service learning had in helping

them to understand their role with respect to social responsibility within the larger community. I do not interpret this finding as signifying a lack of regard for academic learning on the part of the student and faculty participants in this study. Rather, I interpret the student and faculty responses to be indicative of a *redirection of focus* which signified their shared regard for what they believed were more important benefits derived from their variety of service learning experiences.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

The primary goal of this study has been to advance an understanding of service learning as a strategy for enhancing perceptions of self-efficacy. Through a qualitative study of college students and faculty involved in service learning, I explored facets of the service experience that are most beneficial in promoting perceptions of self-efficacy for both students and faculty. The results of this study indicate that both students and faculty had positive perceptions of their ability to facilitate change in the larger community as a result of their participation in service learning. I also found that the student and faculty participants believed that their service learning experiences strengthened their understanding of self in relation to their broader communities.

The most promising comments were from those students who described their experience with service learning as having even greater significance than their academic involvements. For example, one student commented, "For the first time this whole year I had done something that actually helped me learn about something truly important. I didn't learn about math or history but about myself, and what I need to do to help others." I think comments like this demonstrate that the need to improve and reform cognitive outcome measures of service learning goes beyond issues of methodology or

evaluation strategies. The comments that these students made about the value of their experiences gets to the heart of what service learning is essentially about. To provide students with the opportunity to strengthen their perceptions of self-efficacy, and to draw connections between their theoretical studies and their experiences in community, is the genuine heart of the service learning method.

This observation is not unique to this study. Rhoads (1997) notes that service learning has "evolved as a vehicle to strengthen students' learning, to reconnect them with their communities, to counter the imbalance in our current society between learning and living, and to repair the broken connections between learning and community" (p. 1). This study's findings are also consistent with Rhoads (1997) in noting the value of service learning for strengthening students' connections to the communities they serve. For example, several of the focus group participants indicated that they continued to volunteer in those communities beyond the time that had originally been allocated for their service project. This indicates that service learning participants often form long-lasting relationships with their community partners through their collaborative efforts on joint projects.

This study relied heavily on the participants' own descriptions of the affective impact of their service learning experiences. I targeted the kind of meaning students construct about their service encounters as a means to identify important aspects of service learning associated with perceptions of self-efficacy. These participant responses are important in this study not only as learning outcomes, but as indications of the nature of the relationship between service learning and perceptions of self-efficacy. Several studies have found that students' perceptions of self-efficacy influence

the choices they make and the courses of action they pursue (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Raven, 1991). Furthermore, we have learned that students engage in tasks in which they feel competent and tend to avoid those in which they do not (Ames, 1992; Bandura, 1986). Perceptions of self-efficacy help determine how much effort students will expend on an activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles, and how resilient they will be in the face of adverse situations (Bandura, 1986). The higher the sense of efficacy is evidenced, the greater the personal effort, persistence, and resilience also evidenced by students.

Although the focus of this study was not on student learning with respect to discipline-specific coursework, most of the student participants answered positively when questioned about the impact of service learning on their academic learning; that is, they described an increased ability to remember empirical information connected to their courses. For example, one student commented that the dates of important legislation studied in a political science course "stuck in the mind" after experiencing what he took to be examples of such legislation in practice in the community. Another student suggested that, after her involvement with service learning in an Appalachian community in Kentucky, she understood better the importance of geographic location as a contributing factor to one's cultural values.

Many service learning practitioners have concluded that the primary objective of service learning should be to increase academic learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Jaeger, 1988; Troppe, 1995). However, most of these studies rely exclusively on student grade point averages (GPA) as their evidence of increased academic learning. This reliance on student GPA data may actually diminish the results that researchers hoped to

demonstrate, particularly when evaluation of student coursework is based primarily on "objective" tests that cannot measure the impact of learning that is processed through the lens of critical self-reflection.

For example, none of the 20 students who participated in this study's focus group expressed an interest in discipline-specific learning as the primary objective for service learning practitioners. They wanted to focus instead on the way that service learning had impacted their current work, and to address personal and professional development that they could relate to their service learning experiences. Service learning practitioners typically seek out and engage dynamic learning environments that offer students opportunities to test their skills and confront the internal and external barriers they may perceive as limiting the successful achievement of their goals. At its best, service learning requires observation, investigation, solution building, and resolution by students who must formulate their own solutions. In this study, both student and faculty participants were focused on social issues and social institutions that influence individuals, groups, and community service organizations.

Implications for Further Research

The reticence to elaborate on the relationship between service learning and academic coursework is an interesting finding that leads to further research questions. For example, do students and faculty perceive improved academic learning as an external motivation for participation in service learning? And if so, why do internal factors contribute more significantly to participation in service learning than do external factors? Furthermore, we may want to conduct longitudinal studies that follow faculty and students involved with service learning in order to gauge the level of commitment

to community that was expressed by participants in this study. For example, is the heightened sense of self-efficacy a short-term effect of service learning involvement, or do student and faculty perceptions of self-efficacy act as catalysts that have more long-term impact on student and faculty commitments to their larger community?

Cairn and Cairn (1999) assert that one basic rationale for implementing service learning into an educational curriculum is to reform education. Their perspective is based on the assumption that service learning furthers student development by helping students to "come up with more satisfying and complex ways to understand and act on their world" (p. 745). Claims regarding the goals of service learning are consistent with recent claims from cognitive sciences about education goals more generally (Crabbe, 1989; Troppe, 1995). For example, creative measurement of students' deep understanding and ability to transfer knowledge is something that cognitive scientists have been struggling with for some time; building on their work in project and problem-based learning will advance our ability to measure the learning outcomes of service learning. The research of cognitive scientists, particularly with respect to problem-based learning, indicates that we might measure learning outcomes more successfully by focusing on the long-term gains of service learning involvement rather than traditional end-of-term measures.

Having been involved in service learning for the past 12 years, I continue to be impressed by the impact of service work on both students and faculty. Service learning is not just an assignment to be completed. Rather, it is a process that leads students to the core of what it means to be human. The experience and knowledge gained in service learning changed them as individuals because it forced them to struggle with many

difficult questions: what is the role of the individual in society? What does it mean to define oneself in relation to the larger community? These questions are at the core of my own primary question regarding a holistic perception of self identity. What sort of person do I want to be? Do I want to define myself primarily in terms of my own individual interests, or should I include my concern for others as part of my identity? In other words, would I describe myself as a caring person who tries to help others whenever it is possible for me to do so? Is that an important aspect of my self-identity? Should helping others be an obligatory part of my identity, or simply optional? These deep issues require a lifetime of reflection and critical analysis, and certainly none of us can completely resolve and answer these questions as the result of some single set of experiences.

The Future of Service Learning

Perhaps the judgment about the level of education an individual has reached should ultimately be based on the breadth and depth of his or her queries at any given time. If this type of judgment is legitimate, then an educated person is one for whom answers obtained are never representative of the terminal stage of knowledge. Insofar as traditional grades measure replicated learning or memory of content, they are weak measures of the outcomes we expect to see enhanced by service learning. From my years of work in service learning, I know that students initially find the experiential learning process confusing and are skeptical about whether it will provide them with the skills required to meet their course objectives. Since many students initially have limited critical thinking skills, they are inclined to have a negative attitude toward experiences that do not explicitly connect with discipline-specific expectations. Instead,

they are keen to be given recipes and strategies for learning the lessons required to make the grade in the course.

To alleviate some of this initial fear and confusion I have tried numerous strategies, including sharing the final reflection papers written by students from the previous year and talking about my own service learning experiences. In most instances once the students become involved in the process, service learning begins to make sense to them. They become highly enthusiastic about it, and recognize that they have learned a tremendous amount about some relevant aspect of the academic discipline's learning objectives for that course. Therefore, it can be concluded that learning, as envisaged here, does not necessarily take place in a linear fashion; nor is it necessarily additive or accumulative in character. We should be careful not to misinterpret the transmission of established knowledge as the sole function of education rather than as simply the raw material for reflection. What I am specifically deploring is the displacement of means and ends in education, in which "facts" and "answers" have become the ends rather than the means, and have blocked the realization of the noblest end of education, namely, to promote meaningful inquiry and self-reflection.

It is not possible to predict exactly what content knowledge our students will need in the 21st century; nor is it possible to cover all the information that will prove to be useful for their continued success. However, we can say with considerable confidence that an ability to think creatively, be adaptive to change, and to solve problems will serve our students well no matter what challenges face them in the future. Given the diversity of learning environments endemic to service learning, an evaluation strategy must be designed to provide some basis for comparing outcomes across

classrooms, while making judgments that are responsive to the situational diversity in each unique service project. Any number of factors may be incorporated as data and used to inform the evaluation process, but ultimately the evaluation of service learning should seldom be based solely on the results of statistical data or content analysis (Stanton, 1994).

There is also the consideration of an esoteric human factor, the "je ne sais quoi" of the learning experience, which can only be accessed by students' personal reflections about their projects. In order for knowledge to become truly generative, students must be able think about what they have experienced and examine new information in relation to their previous knowledge base. The reflection component of service learning evaluation is often the most useful means of overall program assessments (Boss, 1994), and such reflection may be guided by the teacher or self-directed by the student. Through personal reflection, students can elaborate and adapt their worldview based on new knowledge structures that they have helped design.

Final Comments

In this study I have attempted to further articulate and clarify the relationship between students' involvement in service learning courses and their perceptions of self-efficacy and personal obligation with regard to community and public service. Although a great deal of work remains to be done, this study helps us envision the real possibilities for developing service learning programs in higher education. By connecting service learning to the concept of self-efficacy and personal obligation with regard to community and public service, student learning can be expanded beyond the objectives of the particular project in question. With community as the broader subject

matter, students can be encouraged to think critically, and all academic subjects or disciplines can contribute to the idea of community. Moreover, students can bring different conceptions of community and citizenship to the understanding of their service work. For example, "my community" can be defined geographically, institutionally, or culturally. Students can thereby define community quite differently and yet have a common, civic reflection on their service. Such an understanding would have the added value of interpreting educational policies from perspectives as both the practitioner and the learner, as the teacher and the critic, and as the citizen and the individual in society.

Ideally, service learning programs should encourage the joint obligation of students and teachers to design an environment that is nourishing both in the quality of ideas and in the experiences it has to offer. The traditional division between life in the external community and life in college needs to be removed in order to make explicit the relevance of the higher educational experience. We have come to understand that learning retention levels are highest when we see the relevance of the course material and have a stake in what we are learning.

By occasionally moving students out of the classroom and off the campus we are moving them into a situation in which they must assume responsibility and accountability for what they do. Once the interests are deeply rooted and firmly held, including the interest in learning, those interests will continue after graduation. After all, the undergraduate years should be a time to encourage the development of new interests, and a place for beginning an exploration of the world, instead of placing barriers between the campus environment and the external community.

The implications of adopting service learning that have been discussed in this study suggest that we must radically shift some common perceptions held in higher education about service learning. For example, service learning should not be construed simply as another course component to be added when time permits. Nor should it be reserved for courses only after the basic general education program has been mastered; nor is it a method best reserved for a minority of students, such as those most academically gifted. Adopting the service learning paradigm in higher education must reflect our recognition that learning can be nurtured and cultivated in a variety of environmental settings by students with a wide range of skills. The extent to which such radical shifts in our perceptions will affect scholarship in the field of service learning research is an issue with far-reaching implications for how our service learning leaders will perceive themselves as agents of social change. Thus, it is no small matter to consider the epistemological girdings of our service learning leaders. Rather, it makes all the difference in the world.

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APPENDIX A

FACULTY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Name

2. Department

3. Can you describe the kind of service learning project(s) you have been involved with?

4. How do you think these activities help your students to learn your course material better?

5. What support or encouragement do you receive for becoming involved with service learning?

APPENDIX B

PROCEDURE FOR INDEPENDENT DATA READERS

1. Please notice that you have three envelopes of data sets that are labeled as:

A) Faculty Interviews B) Focus Group Notes C) Student Questionnaires

2. You are asked to please read only one data set at a time. Please read each data set in the page sequence as numbered. As you read each page, please circle the words and/or sentences that you would associate with Albert Bandura's (1977) definition of self-efficacy: Self-efficacy is the belief in our ability to organize and execute actions that are needed to manage prospective situations in community.

3. After you have read and circled all three data sets, please use the numbered index cards enclosed in each envelope to record the words and/or sentences that you circled for each data set. The numbered index cards should correspond to the page numbers for each data set.

4. When you have completed the steps as noted above, please return all three envelopes to Monalisa Mullins in Chaminade Hall room 228-B (or ph 229-3306 for pick-up).